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Anura Bandaranaike

- ★ **Chief Ministers Removed by Court Order**
- ★ **Interview with Chairman of Select Committee on Ethnic Problem**
- ★ **Crisis in the DMK**
- ★ **Reflections on Tamil Refugees in Switzerland**
- ★ **Obstacles to Peace**

★ **Anura Bandaranaike Resigns From SLFP**

★ **Ethnic Conflict – Role of the State**

★ **Suicide-Bomb-Kit Found in Colombo**



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*'I do not agree with a word
of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it.'*
— Voltaire.

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COURTS AND PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

The judges of the Court of Appeal who delivered the recent judgement declaring the appointment of Chief Ministers to the Southern and North Western Provincial Councils by the Governors of the respective Councils as unreasonable and illegal and ordering their removal deserve special mention and praise for they have, by the action, enhanced the image of integrity and impartiality of the Court. There was a time when, in the post-1977 era of executive presidency, a creeping public perception was gaining ground that the judiciary in Sri Lanka was being massaged by executive interference, direct or otherwise. There was also a belief that some of the then sitting judges were ready to be prevailed upon to be dictated to by the executive. However, by some of their judgements in the recent past, and certainly with the latest judgement on the appointment of the Chief Ministers, the judges seem to have redeemed their reputation as belonging to an independent judiciary which is a prerequisite for any democratic society that makes claim to be governed under the rule of law.

The action of the Governors of these Provincial Councils following the elections in May this year in appointing two Chief Ministers belonging to the ruling United National Party when that party did not possess an absolute majority in either of these Councils was an act of outrageous abuse of the discretionary power vested in them.

In the Southern Provincial Council, the combined strength of the Peoples Alliance and the Democratic National Front was 28 elected councillors while the United National Party had secured 27 seats. In the case of the North Western Provincial Council, the total strength of the PA and DUNF was 27 whereas the UNP had 25 seats. The PA and DUNF had jointly provided the Governors with documentary evidence to substantiate their claim that their nominees to the posts of Chief Minister of these Councils possessed the support of the majority of elected members. But the governors chose to appoint the UNP nominees as Chief Ministers who had the support of less than 50 per cent of the elected members. Their action was plainly unreasonable and illegal, and above all undemocratic in that it sought to frustrate and subvert the will of the electorate.

There is no doubt that the action of the Governors of these Councils was tainted by political partisanship. It is an example of the political corruption that has begun to characterise the way in which the country has been governed. If one expects persons vested with discretionary power 'in trust for the public, to be used for the public good' to act with propriety, they must be persons of integrity capable of performing their functions with impartiality and strictly in accordance with the parameters set down by law. The Governors of these provinces could not have satisfied that test. Mr. Montague Jayawickrema and M.A. Bakeer Markar, the Governors of the North Western and Southern Provincial Councils belonged to the UNP and they were Ministers in previous UNP governments. They had outlived their usefulness as political heavyweights of a bygone era. Their appointment as Governors was a form of reward for their past services to the ruling party. In return, the expectation of those who put these men in the elevated position they held was for them to act in the way they did, that is to act in a partisan manner in furtherance of the interest of the ruling party.

Besides the personality of the holder of the office of Governor, although not elected, the Governor's position in the Provincial Council system in Sri Lanka is an extraordinary one. He is appointed by and holds office 'during the pleasure of the President' who is the leader of the ruling party. Under the Sri Lankan constitution 'the executive power of the people' is vested in the President. And the executive power in relation to the matters which are within the competence of the Province shall be exercised by the Governor 'either directly or through Ministers of the Board of Ministers, or through officers subordinate to him'. There is thus an unseverable constitutional umbilical cord that makes the Provincial Council dependent through the office of the Governor on the President for the exercise of any executive power in relation to all matters within its competence. Therein lies a fundamental infirmity in the democratic character of the system of devolution of powers in the island. Basic to this anomaly is the executive presidency which is the repository of all executive power. And such an executive presidency is inconsistent with the concept of a democratic system of constitutional devolution of autonomous powers to a Provincial Council elected by the people.

PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE

Chairman Sees a Federal Solution on the Indian Model

The interim report of the Parliamentary Select Committee, mandated to find a consensus solution to the national question will be presented to Parliament after October 15. In an interview with Rita Sebastian Chairman of the Committee, Mangala Moonesinghe, for the first time since he chaired the discussions answers questions ranging from why he moved the motion for a Select Committee, to the overall achievements of two years of deliberations, he sees federalism on the Indian model as a possible constitutional solution to the conflict.

Q: What made you move the motion in Parliament for a Select Committee to find a consensus political solution to the national question?

A: I felt the country was in the mood for a peaceful resolution of the national conflict, having judged the tempo in Parliament even among extremist groups. For the first time there was an opportunity to get the elected representatives, of all shades of opinion, to collectively pursue the possibility for a peace through discussion. Had I moved this motion 5 years ago it would not have been accepted unanimously by all parties. That alone is an achievement. Not since independence has the opposition and government sat down to find a solution. Earlier attempts, first in 1957 when the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) reached agreement with the Tamil parties it was opposed vehemently by the United National Party (UNP) in opposition. In 1966 when Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake with S.J.V. Chelvanayakam came to an agreement the SLFP in power sabotaged it. So you the Sinhala parties have been playing politics with the national question.

Q: How did the public respond to your appeal for their participation in the deliberation?

A: 300 or more memoranda came in. We classified them under political parties, other organisations and under those who came before the Committee and gave evidence.

Q: Did the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as reported submit a proposal?

A: No all other Tamil parties responded but the LTTE maintained a noble silence. So it was clear that the LTTE was not prepared to participate in any negotiations. It is unfortunate that the LTTE did not make use of this body comprising both government and opposition, for any agreement with such a body would have been an agreement with both government and opposition. So it was now very clear that with the LTTE not participating

there would be no easy resolution of the conflict.

Q: How then can you achieve peace when the main party to the conflict hasn't participated in the peace negotiations?

A: The Committee had to now look out for other options to achieve peace, which would take longer, and which also meant devising new strategies.

Q: How successful was that exercise?

A: That mainly was to free one part of the area of conflict namely the east and try to return that area to peace and normalcy.

Q: How were you going to do that?

A: Jaffna MP, Mr. Srinivasan proposed 2 separate units, one for the north with its 98% Tamils, and one for the multi-ethnic east where there is equal representation of all three communities, within a federal structure. At that stage 40 of the 45 members of the Select Committee agreed to 2 separate Provincial Councils and a constitution similar to that of the Indian model. The Committee also by a majority, agreed to diminish the powers of the concurrent list or eliminate it totally and devolve them to the Provincial Councils. This was one area where the centre and the provinces had dual powers. Invariably the centre assigned to itself all the powers depriving the Provincial Councils and thereby nullifying the whole purpose of devolution.

Q: What were the other areas of agreement?

A: Having heard the army give evidence, the committee was of the view, that wherever possible, both in the north and east, local elections must be held.

Q: What purpose would local elections serve?

A: Both in the north and east there have been no elections for the past 6 years. People are mostly in refugee camps. Only a Governor administers these areas. So it would be healthy for

people to participate in the elections so that they once again get used to administering their own affairs, and also throw up some new leadership. For instance a Tamil Pradesheeya Sabha, which is an entity of governance could elect its own representatives to govern its own area. So by bringing in a civilian democracy like what happened in the south with the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP).

Q: When did the Tamil parties together with Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) President S. Thondaman move out of the Select Committee?

A: When it was agreed to have two Provincial Councils for the north and east.

Q: What about the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC)?

A: They agreed at first to the delinking of the two provinces, but later changed their mind and moved out of the Committee. But there are a number of Muslims and Tamils in the Select Committee. The idea for 2 separate Councils came about when some of the Sinhalese and Muslims gave evidence before the Committee. Their contention was that the controversial merger had taken place without asking the people. So they wanted a referendum to decide the issue.

It is unfortunate that these parties should have taken a negative attitude and moved out while the whole purpose of the exercise was to see whether other options could be looked into like a re-demarcation of boundaries where you can still achieve a merged north east. Or you could have a separate constitutional structure where you have 2 separate Councils and an Apex body elected by the 2 Councils with administrative powers over the north-east. It would thus satisfy both demands, a merger and de-merger. None of these parties were willing to explore the possibilities.

Q: How would your Committee seek to achieve peace given these constraints?

A: Since the LTTE has not come forward peace will have to take a more protracted and circuitous route. There is peace in the south and economic activity is on the uptake providing jobs and income to the population. The strategy of the Select Committee therefore is to provide the infrastructure for development in the east. There is on hold 580 million US dollars already pledged for development of the north east by the international community.

There is a possibility of 2 highways,

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'Operation Yal Devi' Stopped in its Track

In the pre-conflict days, the Yal Devi train service operated twice a day starting from the Fort railway station in Colombo to its most-northern destination Kankesanthurai (KKS) through Jaffna. Since then, except for a brief period when the IPKF managed to enable it to operate, train services to the north have remained totally disrupted – even the rail tracks have been uprooted and used in the cause of the war effort.

If the code name: 'Operation Yal Devi' assigned to the recent military operation – one of the biggest in recent times – launched by the government against the Tamil Tigers is anything to go by, the eventual destination of this effort must have been the capture of the Jaffna peninsula from Tiger control. But the operation was not only stopped in its track; the forces retreated after suffering heavy losses.

Over three thousand troops backed by the might of the country's Airforce and Navy set out on their journey on the morning of 28 September, not from Colombo 250 miles away as the Yal Devi train did in pre-conflict days, but from their base camp at Elephant

Pass, just about 30 kilometres away from Jaffna town. The operation was preceded by clamping down a round-the-clock curfew to cover the Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts and indiscriminate aerial bombardment and naval shelling mainly in the Jaffna district.

In the face of fierce Tiger resistance, and amidst heavy losses on both sides, on the third day the army had managed to advance just 12 kilometres to Palai and on the fourth day to Kilali located on the northern side of the Jaffna lagoon from where the Tigers ran a boat service for people who wished to travel to and from Jaffna and the mainland. On the fifth day, the Defence Ministry claimed that the forces had destroyed Tiger bases, landing points, and hundreds of their boats at Kilali, and eliminated the capacity and infrastructure of the Tigers to resume their boat service. It was also reported that the troops were consolidating their positions at Kilali and advancing towards Jaffna. On the following day, instead of proceeding towards Jaffna as they had originally intended, the forces made a hasty and

ignominious retreat to their base camp at Elephant Pass. Just four days later on 5 October the Tigers announced that they had resumed their boat service.

Operation Yal Devi was launched in the wake of the much publicised statement by President Wijetunga that the problem in the north-east of the island was not an ethnic problem, but one of terrorism and therefore must be dealt with as such. This is the first major military operation undertaken since Mr. Wijetunga assumed office and certainly had his approval as Commander-in-Chief of the island's armed forces.

The stalemate on the military front in the recent past has been punctuated by spectacular Tiger attacks resulting in enormous losses in men and material for the armed forces as demonstrated by the overrunning of the Janakapura army in which the Tigers not only destroyed the camp and killed scores of soldiers, but also got away with over Rs.50 million worth of weapons. Not many moons later, the Tigers successfully mounted a suicide attack and destroyed an Israeli-built naval gunboat and again got away with a large quantity of weapons including sophisticated equipment. On the contrary, except for indulging in indiscriminate aerial bombardment and shelling from the sea, which had little adverse impact on LTTE's strength, but resulted in incalculable damage to the civilian population, the armed forces have failed to make any significant headway against the Tigers.

The armed forces have to date not recovered from the major loss they suffered when ten of its most experienced and senior commanding officers including Major General Denzil Kobekaduwa, fell victims to a Tiger landmine in August last year. Since then, the country's President, Mr. Premadasa, and a formidable opposition Sinhala politician, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali who was once a Minister for National Security, were assassinated and the Tigers have been blamed for these.

The role played by the Joint Operations Command (JOC) located in Colombo which was in overall charge of the prosecution of the government's war effort was a matter of grave controversy within the armed forces at senior level, and President Wijetunga recently sought to end this controversy by dissolving the JOC and replacing it with a Joint Council consisting of all three service commanders and the Defence Secretary. The President con-

The Sunday Times (10 October) editorially questioned the rationale for the launching of 'Operation Yal Devi' posing some embarrassing but relevant questions: 'Military operations can be counter-productive and costly. As the true picture of the recent "Operation Yal Devi" emerges, it would seem that the clash of interests between political need and military strategy has produced more questions than answers, especially in view of the loss of some 400 lives including one of the heaviest casualty tolls for the army in what is described as a "limited operation".'

The main question being asked by the people of Sri Lanka and military analysts is why this operation was launched. If the military objective of "Operation Yal Devi" was to destroy LTTE boats, could not this have been carried out by the Airforce and Navy? Some reports from the North indicate that most of the boats destroyed were old and unserviceable ones. Why were more than three thousand soldiers thrown into this limited operation where a miscalculation on Wednesday, September 29 led to

the death of more than 110 soldiers and heavy material losses?

When the troops finally reached Kilali on Thursday and temporarily sealed the LTTE sea route, the army faced the option of proceeding to Chavakachcheri or returning to base at Elephant Pass, because it lacked the men and material to hold the captured territory... Consequently "Operation Yal Devi" was called off and the troops returned to Elephant Pass. Reports over the weekend indicated that the LTTE was again operating boat services from Kilali on the Jaffna lagoon.'

But the title of the main feature article in the government's media flagship, *The Sunday Observer* (10 October) by its editor, Mr. H.L.D. Mahindapala read: **'While heavy mortar fire rained and claimed heavy casualties the soldiers stood their ground and, in a hand-to-hand battle forced the terrorists to flee, clearing the way to Kilali – THE DAY WHEN THE TIGERS FOUGHT AND RAN.'**

One wonders whether the two editors were commenting on the outcome of the same battle.

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tinues to hold the ministerial portfolio of Defence in addition to his constitutional position of being the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

In the backdrop of the heavy losses suffered in recent months by his security forces at the hands of the Tigers, his rejection of recent peace moves by concerned international mediators and his characterisation of the northeast problem as one of terrorism, the presumption is that President Wijetunga himself took a deliberate decision to break the stalemate on the war front by confronting the Tigers militarily. Hence, the responsibility for the authorization and the ill-fated outcome of 'Operation Yal Devi' must fairly and squarely lie with the President himself.

The operation was launched on 28 September and expected to last 15 days. It lasted just five days. Its stated aim was the capture of Kilali and then advance and capture Chavakachcheri within the Jaffna peninsula. But having advanced up to Kilali and destroyed some old and dilapidated boats, the troops not only failed to remain and consolidate their hold on captured territory, but retreated back to from

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one to Trincomalee and one to Batticaloa. This would immediately generate plenty of jobs for people in the province as well as attract Tamils from the north to the east in search of jobs. Already as a result of the Mahaveli development strategies in the east new agricultural exports all adding to the incomes of the rural people. The Australian government has already started building an international airport in Hingusakgoda to service the new exports and once tourism develops the east will naturally benefit. Trincomalee can also be made into an export processing zone and an industrial enclave which will attract foreign investment and provide the foundation for an economic take-off. So if peace cannot be hammered out at the table, peace will be brought to a greater geographic area which will generate new employment and increased incomes leaving terrorism without the people.

Q: Will the proposals of the Committee be debated in Parliament? and, will some of them be implemented?

A: It is possible that Parliament might appoint a smaller group of MPs to sit with a technical team to implement a constitutional change with a concept of federalism on lines similar to the Indian constitution.

where they started, Elephant Pass. It failed to achieve the objective of removing the ability of the Tigers of running their boat service from Kilali. As many as 125 soldiers, including 8 officers, were killed and over 250 of them were seriously injured. A large quantity of weaponry, including battle tanks and armoured vehicles, were either destroyed or lost to the Tigers. In this connection the defence correspondent of *The Sunday Times* (10 October) lamented: 'Apart from human casualties, the army lost equipment worth millions of rupees. The loss of equipment is costly in terms of the gain to the enemy.'

As for the Tigers, over one hundred of their men including senior cadres were killed in battle. Despite their losses, the Tigers have no doubt displayed their capacity, in terms of men,

material and determination, to resist the onslaught of the Sri Lankan armed forces. The fact that the troops having captured Kilali thought it prudent to abandon it and return to base would appear to point to the recognition by the forces of the ability of the Tigers to come back and mount merciless guerrilla attacks. Not without justification, the LTTE has claimed that the troops advance into Jaffna was halted in the face of fierce Tiger resistance and counter-assault.

Although the main areas of the battle, Elephant Pass to Kilali, were sparsely populated, the indiscriminate aerial bombing by attack aircraft, and shelling from navy gunboats covered a much wider area and as the bombs and shells rained down hundreds of civilian deaths and injured and destruction of property were reported.

OPERATION YAL DEVI

Battle of No Victors

International cricketers Greg Chappell, Ian Botham, and Richard Hadlee would have been more than happy if they knew that their names were well known not only to the lovers of the gentleman's game, but in the recent weeks, to those running the military machine against separatist terrorists.

At least by name, the trio were among the assortment of code names Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne, gave his top men who were executing 'Operation Yal Devi' – a major military offensive north west of Elephant Pass.

Greg Chappell was the code name of Major General Rohan Daluwatte, General Officer Commanding the northern sector. His Task Force Commander, Brigadier Vasantha Perera (Brigade Commander at Elephant Pass), was Ian Botham.

The Colonels who headed the three brigades involved in the operation were Col. Sarath Fonseka (Namal), Col. Shantha Kotegoda (Vikum) and Col. Sarath Munasinghe (Hadlee).

Just before the crack of dawn on September 28, the three men supported by air cover and artillery were leading their troops in a military operation whose specific aim, as spelt out in the operation order, was to destroy the fleet of boats and the Sea Tiger Base at Kilali – the nerve centre from where the LTTE operated a boat service to ferry civilians to and from the peninsula in open defiance of a government declared 'no-go' zone.

This was also an important base

from which the LTTE moved men and material from the Jaffna peninsula for its guerrilla campaign in the mainland. Tigers considered this as one of their strategic locations and fought fierce battles to keep it under their control.

For the Government it was a significant military operation. It came not only in the wake of the disbanding of the Joint Operations Command (JOC) and vesting the war effort in the hands of the service and police chiefs, but also in the immediate backdrop of President D.B. Wijetunga's declaration that there is no Tamil ethnic problem but only a 'terrorist problem'.

Like the Yal Devi express train from Colombo to Jaffna in the peaceful yesteryears, one would have expected 'Operation Yal Devi' to be on rails throughout the various stages of its execution. Day one, with little or no resistance except sporadic mortar fire from the terrorists buoyed hopes and fuelled visions of a major victory. So much so, media accounts are glowing.

But, just the second day, the exercise suffered a major setback. Colonel Sarath Fonseka was advancing with an infantry column from Pooneryn towards Chavakachcheri when they faced an unexpected ambush. This was after they had moved four kilometres out of Elephant Pass. They were attacked in strength. The men who moved on foot protecting the advancing Czechoslovak built Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) were fired upon, many of them at close quarters. As they

dropped dead, the Tigers took on the isolated MBTs.

As women cadres provided fire support, their male colleagues fired Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs). Two tanks were soon ablaze with the men inside. One more was damaged but was still battleworthy. This single encounter left more than 70 soldiers, all from the same battalion, dead. An equal number including Col. Fonseka were wounded. He was promptly flown to Colombo and is now recuperating at the Army Hospital. Col. Susil Chandrapala (code name Arjuna) immediately took over his tasks.

As the battle heated up, Tigers also attacked a moving column from the flank. But relentlessly the officers and men, undaunted by the fate that befell their dead colleagues, pushed ahead with the week long operation to arrive at Kilali.

When the exercise ended, 111 soldiers were killed and seven were missing in action. The latter included Captain Nanayakkara, a one time Aide de Camp (ADC) to Major General Y. Balaratnarajah. He had been nominated to be ADC to the Army Commander when the incident occurred.

Besides the two MBTs that were destroyed, security forces lost among others, ten Machine Guns, four Light Machine Guns (LMGs), 72 personal weapons (carried by soldiers), four RPGs two 16 mm mortars, grenade launchers, grenades and a large quantity of ammunition.

By their own admission Tigers lost 126. The number included five 'Majors' - Nahayan alias Nanen Singarasa Arulnayagam, Major Thushyanathan alias Dharmalingam, Suthanya alias Nadarajan Subashini, Senthuran Premnath alias Sithambaram Pillai Sivurban (the Vadamarchchi leader) and Yalisai alias Mano Thirulogasingham Selvarani. Around 40 civilians and an equal number of irregular ranks involved in casualty evacuation and other tasks were also reported killed. Security forces have established the identities of 91 of the Tigers killed so far.

Senior officers who took part in the operation said SLAF aircraft and helicopters had inflicted the most number of casualties and caused damage to hide-outs by their pin-point bombing.

SLAF's Director Operations, Air Commodore Anslem Peiris, a veteran of the terrorist war and Wing Commander Jayalath Weerakody, were working round the clock with the Army top brass who were directing operations from a crowded command room at Elephant Pass.

With the serious debacle on the second day necessitating airlifting the dead and the injured, top brass at the command room were soon re-thinking on the original aims of the operation. There were suggestions on whether the aim should be modified to clinch a victory in the backdrop of the unexpected debacle. Two more battalions were inducted to the task which had begun with six.

It was proposed that the troops who had seized Kilali should advance further in an eastwardly direction and thus seize control of a broader land-mass - a delicate manoeuvre where troops would have had to contend with the enemy on their left and right sides whilst ensuring their main supply routes. Accomplishing this task, top brass argued, would signal greater victory.

Government leaders were consulted from the battlefield and the result was a top level conference in Colombo. There were conflicting accounts about the outcome.

Some senior Military officials argued that Government leaders disapproved the move to deviate from the original aim of the operation and wanted troops to return to base. Political sources, however, insisted that no such 'military decision' was taken at political level. These sources said Government leaders told those responsible to make a decision after consulting the field commanders and ensuring security in the somewhat consolidated east is not disturbed by troop withdrawals.

The result was a withdrawal at 6pm on October 4. At midnight on the same day, the LTTE resumed activity at Kilali. The next day SLAF reconnaissance flights spotted more than 300 boats. It is now known that the Tigers had removed a large number of boats from the area presumably on the advance knowledge that they would come under attack. Hence a large number had been saved. There was formal confirmation yesterday that the boat service for civilians had resumed from Kilali to Sinna Paranthan.

'Operation Yal Devi' The Sunday Times learnt, had been on the drawing boards for almost three weeks before it was executed. At one top-level conference held to make plans, a senior officer who was asked to deploy his men to launch an assault from one flank was sceptical. He had politely pointed out that he was not prepared to undertake what he called suicide missions.

But in the days that followed, top brass knocked into shape the operational orders for 'Operation Yal Devi'. One of the main deceptions when

troops moved out of Elephant Pass on September 28 took place from the Palaly Camp.

Under the command of Brigadier Anton Wijendra, troops moved out from Palaly and fought their way through for some five kilometres towards Atchuvally. Five soldiers were killed in the fighting that ensued and the troops returned to base later that evening.

Whilst these battles were raging in the north, commandos of the Special Forces Brigade under the charge of Brigadier Janaka Perera, laid a successful ambush and killed ten terrorists when they were establishing camps in preparation for the oncoming monsoon. The incident occurred on the Mullaitivu-Trincomalee border in an area named Angoda. Three weapons and a communications set were recovered.

The security forces expedition to Kilali has been at the expense of 111 dead, 187 wounded and seven missing in action. Apart from human casualties, they have lost equipment worth several million rupees. The loss of equipment is costly not only in terms of money but also of the gain to the enemy. What were the strategic gains of this costly exercise?

As a result of the operation, the sea route was temporarily denied to the LTTE. However, the withdrawal of the Army from Kilali has enabled the Tigers to re-establish the Sea Tiger Base and resume boat services between Kilali and Sinna Paranthan.

The Sunday Times learnt that defence experts assisting the Government were asking what has been the tactical and strategic value of 'Operation Yal Devi'? They say that any successful military operation must achieve a tactical advantage which in turn contributes to the strategic military and political aims. They contend that an operation not designed for such purpose is an *ad hoc* exercise and in the overall context meaningless.

Undeniably the operation has demonstrated the political will to resort to a military solution. Apart from this, what tactical advantage the operation has accrued to the conduct of the war is not clear. Also not clear is how such tactical advantage contributed to the overall war strategy.

It would appear that the whole aim of the operation in its tactical concept was to primarily destroy the LTTE base at Kilali. A secondary objective would have been to draw out the LTTE and to inflict maximum casualties.

The destruction of the LTTE would

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NEWS REVIEW

★ Court Orders Removal of Two UNP Chief Ministers

The judgement of the Sri Lankan Court of Appeal delivered on 8 October has shattered the ruling United National Party's hopes of continuing to hold on to power in the southern and North Western Provincial Councils despite its failure to obtain an overall majority in elections held in May this year. The Court held that the appointment by the Governors of the UNP's nominees as Chief Ministers of these Councils was unreasonable and illegal and directed the respective Governors to appoint the new Chief Ministers in accordance with the law.

The judgement of the Court was in the cases filed on behalf of Mr. G.M. Premachandra of the Democratic United National Front (DUNF) and Mr. Amarasiri Dodangoda of the Peoples Alliance (PA) – the two Councillors nominated for the post of Chief Ministers by the PA and DUNF which had contested the May elections as a coal-

tion – in which they had challenged the legality of the appointment by the Governors of the UNP nominees as Chief Ministers.

On being presented with a certified copy of the judgement by the DUNF led by the former cabinet minister Gamini Dissanayake, the Governor of the NWP Provincial Council, Mr. Montagu Jayawickrema had no alternative but to swear-in and appoint the DUNF's General Secretary, Mr. G.M. Premachandra on 9 October. However, the Governor of the Southern Province, Mr. M.A. Bakeer Markar, was initially seen to be offering 'lame excuses' for his reluctance to appoint the PA's Mr. Amarasiri Dodangoda who had the backing of 22 PA and 6 DUNF Councillors – which constituted an overall majority – as Chief Minister of the SP Provincial Council. However, after popular protest demonstrations, Mr. Dodangoda was sworn in as Chief Minister of the Southern Province.

With the administration of these two Councils falling into the hands of the opposition parties, and the Western Provincial Council already under the control of the opposition led by

Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike, the UNP's monopolistic hold on the political and administrative power at the provincial level has been broken substantially. The UNP, which held sway over all the seven Provincial Councils in the south of the island following the first PC elections held in 1989 which the SLFP boycotted, now controls four Councils and the opposition parties control three Councils including the most populous Western Provincial Council which covers the country's capital city, Colombo. The Northeast Provincial Council was dissolved in March 1990 and it has been under direct central government rule through the Governor and where no elections have been held ever since.

Background

In the elections held in May this year, the UNP secured overall majorities in four of the seven Provincial Councils, and its nominees were duly appointed as Chief Ministers. In the Western, North Western and Southern Provinces, none of the parties had an overall majority. In the Western Provincial Council (WPC), the party position was: 45 for the Peoples Alliance (PA), 43 for the UNP and 17 for the DUNF. The 17 DUNF Councillors in sworn affidavits submitted to the Governor of the Province, Mr. S. Sharvananda, declared their intention to support the PA nominee, Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga to form the administration, and the Governor duly appointed her as Chief Minister.

In the North Western Province, the party positions were: UNP 25 seats; PA 18 seats; and DUNF 19 seats. In the Southern Province, the party positions were: UNP 27 seats; PA 22 seats; and DUNF 6 seats. Despite the fact that the UNP had no overall majorities in these two Councils, UNP nominees were sworn in as Chief Ministers. This was done in spite of the fact that the party managers of the PA and DUNF supported by individual affidavits from elected members of the two parties (who together constituted a majority in these Councils) had informed the respective Governors that the two parties were ready to jointly form the administration. They also had given the names of their nominees for the posts of Chief Ministers. Thus the Governors of these two provinces had acted differently from the course followed by the Governor of the Western Province.

The appointment of the UNP nominees as Chief Ministers in the Southern and North Western PCs produced predictable anger among the opposition parties and they accused

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certainly have dented the military credibility of the Tigers to some extent. In terms of human casualties, there has been a balance on both sides. In terms of equipment, not unnaturally in this type of warfare, the Army has suffered severe losses.

In this situation, had the army sustained itself in Kilali and held on to the territorial gains made, the military loss of face to the LTTE would have been more credible. It would certainly have lowered their esteem in the eyes of the populace and in turn had an impact on the drive to recruit more soldiers.

These long term disadvantages to the LTTE have been negated by the Army withdrawal as indeed the LTTE contention that the Army were unable to sustain themselves in the extended territory they secured – the corollary of which is that they will be unable to do so anywhere else. At least for the immediate term the Army will be confined to hit and withdraw operations.

Understandably the Army lacks the manpower to saturate any more territory than what they hold now. Hence the question is being asked: could not the Kilali Sea Tiger Base have been destroyed by aerial bombardment?

Much has been said that the Army cannot sustain itself in Kilali because of logistic difficulties encountered dur-

ing oncoming monsoons. This surely is the most flimsy and naive statement to make. This factor should have been considered when the operation was planned. To repent now shows weakness in planning.

Last Tuesday, top brass gathered in Elephant Pass Camp for a debrief of the operation. Many were agreed that the troops should have remained in Kilali which they secured at great cost. The pullout was acknowledged by some as a measure of failure.

But for the LTTE, the propaganda machine was working overtime. Video footage shot by Tigers was surreptitiously passed on to CNN television and made news the world over. In New York, where the UN General Assembly is in session, Nadesan Satyendra, a one-time Ministry Secretary was on a campaign that Sri Lankan troops were attacking civilians – the usual LTTE tirade whenever there is an offensive against it.

As the Sri Lanka Army celebrates its 44th anniversary today, thoughts will undoubtedly linger on the men who sacrificed their lives.

Today's celebrations come amidst tight security precautions countrywide amidst reports that LTTE was conducting surveillance on some targets which it had identified for retaliatory attack.

(Courtesy of *The Sunday Times*, 10.10.93).

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the ruling UNP of bring pressure upon the Governors to act in the way they did. The opposition alleged that the Governors of these provinces had acted unlawfully in swearing-in the UNP Chief Ministers when the UNP did not control a majority in those Councils.

A delegation led by Opposition Leader, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike met President Wijetunga to urge him to advise the Governors to change their mind and appoint the persons chosen by the PA and DUNF as Chief Ministers. The President had pointed out to them that the Governors were empowered by the Constitution to call upon whoever, in their opinion, had the most support to form the administration, and had expressed his unwillingness to interfere in the exercise of their constitutional powers.

Article 154B of the Constitution provides as follows:

'The Governor shall appoint as Chief Minister the member of the Provincial Council constituted for that Province who in his opinion is best able to command the support of a majority of the members of that Council.'

Provided that where more than one-half of the members elected to a Provincial Council are members of one political party, the Governor shall appoint the leader of that political party in the Council as Chief Minister.'

In plain words, the position is that where a political party had secured more than fifty percent of the seats, the Governor had no option but to appoint its leaders as the Chief Minister. If no party secured more than fifty percent of the seats, he should appoint as Chief Minister a Councillor 'who in his opinion is best able to command the support of a majority of the members of that Council'. In the case of the Southern and North Western PCs, as none of the parties had secured more than fifty percent of the seats just as in the case of the Western Province, the Governors should have acted in the same way as the Governor of the Western Province did in appointing their Chief Ministers.

In the SPC and NWPC, although the UNP was the single largest party, it had the support of less than fifty percent of the Councillors. The Councillors belonging to the PA and DUNF had in writing notified the respective Governors of their intention to support the PA nominee in the SPC and the DUNF nominee in the NWPC to form an administration. In these two PCs, the UNP although being the single

largest party, had no such support to be able to 'command the support of a majority of members of the Council'. In these circumstances, how the Governors formed the opinion that the UNP could command a majority in these Councils was beyond comprehension, and their action in appointing UNP Chief Ministers was described as nothing but perverse. That is exactly what the Court of Appeal said in its recent judgement in declaring the actions of the respective Governors as unlawful.

★ Anura's Resignation From SLFP

The euphoria in Sri Lanka's opposition ranks in capturing power in two more Provincial Councils in the south of the island following the Supreme Court order removing the UNP's administrations in these Councils was marred by Anura Bandaranaike's unexpected announcement on 11 October of his resignation from Sri Lanka's main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Naturally overjoyed by the likely political bonanza that his resignation may bring to the ruling United National Party and its prospects for regaining power at next year's elections, the party's General Secretary, Mr. Sirisena Cooray, lost no time in extending an open invitation to Anura to join the UNP.

Anura's resignation certainly does not look like a political resignation. The critical issue was the switch of allegiance of the mother from the son to the daughter. Anura, son of two former Prime Ministers, himself once groomed by his mother, former Prime Minister and current leader of the SLFP, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, as the future leader of the SLFP founded by his own father, has been at loggerheads for the last two years with his mother over the increasingly powerful role that his sister, Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike, has begun to play in the affairs of the party. Since rejoining the SLFP and becoming Chief Minister of the Western Provincial Council, and having won over her mother to her side in the battle with her brother, Chandrika's position within the SLFP leadership has become virtually unassailable and with the resignation of Anura, every indication is that she would take over the leadership of the party once her mother decides to give up.

Anura was suspended from the party some three months ago for indiscipline - criticising the party leader and the leadership in the way the party's affairs were being run. He complained of lack of democracy within the party.

No charges were served on him although press speculation referred to some 17 instances of indiscipline in respect of which the party's central committee would hold an inquiry. It is said that what annoyed Anura more was that, during his suspension and consequent inability to attend the party's central committee meetings, an anti-Anura group which has entrenched itself at leadership level was engaged in a witch-hunt against all those who were known to be Anura loyalists. They were being removed from all positions of influence in the party even at branch level. By removing himself from the party, he thought that he could put a stop to the witch-hunt against long standing loyal party loyalists.

In his resignation letter, Anura said that he was forced 'by events engineered and manipulated by a few conspirators who have taken absolute and total control of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to take this decision. I cannot suffer this humiliation any longer and the most honourable thing left for me to do is resign.'

The resignation of Anura has shocked the party. Even those who wanted Anura out of the party never imagined that he would resign. Mrs. Bandaranaike is reported to have reacted as if she had been struck by a thunderbolt. Seventeen of the 65 MPs in the SLFP contingent would appear to have offered to resign from the party in solidarity with Anura, but he had dissuaded them from doing so.

Many who constitute his right-of-centre wing within the party feel that Anura should be persuaded to withdraw his resignation and that his suspension should be removed and he should be reinstated in his position as All Island Organiser of the party, a position he held before his suspension. They feel that with his departure 'the moderate and liberal image' of the party will suffer and the ruling UNP would capitalise on the issue which will seek to portray the SLFP as being in the grip of 'extremist left forces.'

On the other hand the anti-Anura forces within the SLFP see no alternative but to let him go his own way. To them he represents the faction which is moving towards the right and he is out of tune with the left leaning substantial sections both at leadership and grassroots level. With his continuing to remain within the party, they see continuing factional fighting rendering the party incapable of becoming an effective anti-UNP force. They believe that unity and stability within the SLFP can be restored only without Anura.

Anura is not known for his hard work. The main complaint about his lack of activism is that he wakes up too late in the mornings. But he had led the party and functioned as Opposition Leader when his mother was in the political wilderness after she was deprived of her political and civil rights during the regime of former President Junius Jayawardene. He has been an effective and able parliamentary debater. He is no mean public speaker at mass meetings. Being a Bandaranaike, he cannot be said to have no support at all from the people. His departure from the SLFP would have an impact on the SLFP's chances of returning to power. Worse still is if he were to respond positively to the UNP's invitation, joins it and campaigns against the SLFP.

Although the mother-son relationship has been at a highly strained level in the past, those close to Mrs. Bandaranaike confirm that she is 'extremely saddened by the turn of events' which has resulted in her son having to leave the 'party founded by his father'. There are moves being made behind the scene by family members of the Bandaranaike clan to bring back Anura into the fold.

★ Crisis in the DMK Over Tiger Threat

The Dravida Munetra Kalagam (DMK), the main opposition party in the State of Tamil Nadu in south India, is facing a major crisis set off by recent reports based on intelligence information passed on from New Delhi to the State government that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was planning to assassinate the DMK leader, Mr. Muthuvelu Karunanidhi with a view to promoting the chances of its populist and relatively younger parliamentarian, Mr. V. Gopalaswamy becoming the party's leader.

The State government led by Chief Minister Ms. Jayalalitha Jayaram, who is also reputed to be on the hit list of the LTTE, passed on the intelligence received from Delhi to the DMK leader who promptly accepted special security arrangements offered by the State government to protect him from possible threats to his life. The Tamil Tigers strenuously denied the allegation characterising the intelligence reports as a deliberate campaign by the Indian intelligence agency, RAW, to discredit the LTTE in the eyes of the people of Tamil Nadu. There is no doubt that the news of the alleged threat to the DMK leader from the Tigers has aroused much consternation among many sections of the Tamil Nadu

population. This reaction will certainly have adverse consequences for the plight of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in the State.

Whether there is any substance or truth in the reported threat to the DMK leader from the Tigers, it certainly has brought out into the open the long simmering feud within the DMK between its veteran leader Karunanidhi and V. Gopalaswamy. At the centre of this dispute was the question of the succession to the DMK leadership. It is not a secret that Mr. Karunanidhi was promoting the aspirations of his son Mr. M.K. Stalin to succeed him as the leader of the party. A powerful mass speaker and darling of the party's youth sections, Mr. Gopalaswamy would appear to have developed his own aspirations to succeed the ageing DMK leader. In the recent past, there has been a rallying of forces as between Gopalaswamy and Stalin supporters in this leadership contest.

On receiving the information from the State government, Mr. Karunanidhi himself revealed to the press the alleged threat to his life from the LTTE, and the party's journal edited by the leader himself gave front page publicity to what was said at the press conference together with reports that the DMK's office had been flooded with telephone calls and messages from anxious party men and members of the public about the physical safety of the leader.

Faced with these reports of alleged complicity on his part, Mr. Gopalaswamy went public with a press statement openly disavowing any connections with the Tamil Tigers and swearing unflinching and absolute loyalty to his leader Karunanidhi. He even promised to lay down his life to safeguard his leader. But the party's newspaper did not give his statement the publicity it deserved.

What intrigued most observers was why Mr. Karunanidhi, himself went public with the threat to his life allegedly from the Tamil Tigers especially when one of the leaders of his own party, who was also an MP was implicated without even availing himself of an opportunity to discuss the matter with him.

Mr. Gopalaswamy has been known in the past to have been a strong advocate of the LTTE and its cause for a separate state of Eelam. During the fighting between the IPKF and the Tamil Tigers in 1989, he secretly visited the Tiger leader, Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran who was holed up in the jungles of Mullaitivu in northern Sri Lanka incurring the hostility of the Central Government and causing

much embarrassment to the DMK leader.

While partymen loyal to Karunanidhi continue to accuse Gopalaswamy of being actually in league with the LTTE to bring down its leader, Gopalaswamy's supporters emphasise that the whole thing is a plot invented by the RAW, Jayalalitha's AIADMK and Karunanidhi to oust Gopalaswamy from the DMK.

The irony is that in 1991, it was the alleged close connections between Karunanidhi's State government and the Tamil Tigers and his turning a blind eye to LTTE's alleged criminal misdeeds in the State that led to his government being dismissed and central rule being imposed. The subsequent assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, widely believed to be by the LTTE, reduced the DMK to a virtual non-entity in the State Assembly in the elections held in 1991 and brought to power the AIADMK with Jayalalitha at its helm.

Since then, Karunanidhi who earlier used Gopalaswamy to build bridges with the LTTE at a time when the Sri Lankan Tamil issue was occupying a higher profile in Tamil Nadu's political agenda, began to distance himself from the Tigers and has been relatively silent on the issue of the Sri Lankan

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ETHNIC CONFLICT: 1983-1993

Root Cause: Undependability of the State

by Izeth Hussain

(Continued from last issue).

I come now to the question preoccupying the public mind ten years after 1983. Where do we go from here?

There is apparently a broad national consensus in favour of a negotiated settlement and against attempting a military solution. Accordingly the Government's strategy is to see that the LTTE's support base among the Tamils gets more and more eroded as a consequence of increasing economic hardship in the North-East, which will hopefully lead to the taming of the Tiger making a negotiated settlement possible. At present there seems to be no sensible alternative to that strategy, considering the impasse to which we have been brought by post-1977 UNP folly.

However the consensus is being increasingly challenged by the demand that the economy and the country be placed on a war footing. The demand seems to have behind it illusions about a possible military solution. Such illusions have firstly to be got out of the way in answering the question, where do we go from here?

Our soldiers can certainly take Jaffna, probably with heavy combatant and civilian casualties. The problem is what happens thereafter. Guerrilla warfare can be expected to continue, and here we have to take into our reckoning the fact that the LTTE is internationally recognized as the best guerrilla fighting force in the world today, and further we have to remember the discomfiture of the superpowers in facing guerrilla warfare in Vietnam and Afghanistan as well as the IPKF experience in taking Jaffna and eventually losing over a thousand men. The problem is that a guerrilla war has to be won by taking the minds and hearts of the people, not by taking territory. We can take Jaffna and find that our difficulties are compounded.

The experience elsewhere in the world of trying military solutions for ethnic conflicts has not been encouraging. For many years the Kurd rebellion was fuelled by Iranian support. In 1975 the Shah of Iran withdrew that support in terms of a quid pro quo arrangement with Iraq, and the Kurd rebellion quickly collapsed. It looked

like a successful military solution to an ethnic rebellion. But it revived, and still continues as a serious problem. If not for the fact that the Kurds constitute a problem in several countries including Turkey the NATO ally of the US, we can be sure that in the aftermath of the Gulf War the Americans would have set up a separate Kurdistan state. It is not the wisest policy to allow an ethnic conflict to go on indefinitely.

The case of Nigeria's Biafran rebellion in the latter half of the sixties is also instructive. In a brief period of two to three years over a million were killed, and the rebellion was ended by the blocking of food supplies and the ensuing famine. Since then the Ibos of Biafra have lived contentedly with their fellow Nigerians, which might look like a military solution to an ethnic conflict. What actually happened was that the Muslims of the North as well as other Nigerian ethnic groups showed a sensible accommodativeness towards each other after the war was over, having learnt a lesson from their ethnic folly. The lesson is well remembered, as shown by the fact that recently General Babaginda aborted democratic elections out of fear that the folly of the politicians will again lead to ethnic problems.

The hankering after a military solution, in spite of an apparently firm national consensus against it, is quite understandable because it is exasperating to find after ten years of conflict that we are nowhere near a negotiated settlement, and also because of occasional humiliations like Weli Oya. It is an irrational hankering all the same. We can take Jaffna, and even assuming that we militarily defeat the LTTE, we may still find that the ethnic problem cannot be ended without a negotiated settlement. The phases of the Kurd rebellion over the decades, with periods in which it seemed to be practically over, should be particularly instructive for us.

I want now to argue that the problem of reaching a negotiated settlement has proved intractable so far mainly because we have ignored what should be an obvious premise that the solution to a problem should address

the problem, or it will not be solved. We have over-simplified the problem as a whole by recognizing only the problems caused by the intransigence and undependability of the LTTE, and the supposedly excessive claims to federalism and a North-East merger made by the other Tamil parties. We have been ignoring the root problem from which those other problems derive, which is the undependability of the State. We have to ask whether the post-1977 UNP State can be expected to respect the sanctity and inviolability of agreements.

The record of the State in reneging on commitments has been dismal. That record includes going back on the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact and the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam understanding. It is arguable that both those Sinhalese leaders were honourable men who meant well, and certainly wanted to implement those agreements but could not because of popular opposition.

It is an argument that does not apply to what happened after 1977. There was no popular opposition to the District Development Councils, which could have gone a long way to appease the Tamil demand for devolution. But the Jaffna DDC polls of 1981 were blatantly rigged, and the operation of the DDCs was thereafter made a farce. After the IPKF came here in 1987, the Indian side complained that the Peace Accords were not being implemented. On the occasion when a Special Envoy was sent to Colombo, the Indian complaint was that the Sri Lankan side had gone back on an agreed position by the time he returned to Delhi. The Provincial Councils could have been used to show that further devolution is unnecessary, if only they had been made to function properly. Instead they have been made farcical as shown by Chandrika Kumaranatunge's complaint that as Chief Minister she is no more than a glorified Chief Clerk.

In the preceding para I have referred only to matters directly relevant to the ethnic problem. Equally relevant to the problem of the undependability of the State is the pathological drive shown by the post-1977 UNP against standards of public morality, meaning not just the age-old hypocrisies of governments but actual attacks on public morality, as shown by the immediate promotion of police officers convicted by the Supreme Court of human rights violations, and the famous case of the convicted rapist who was pardoned and then made an all-Island Justice of the Peace. Evidently he could have said with Shakespeare's Othello: 'I have done the State some service and they knowe.'

Under the present Government the Udugampola affair has provoked a spate of outraged letters and editorials in the non-Government press. In this context of blatant disdain for the most elementary standards of public morality, it is questionable whether many Sinhalese have confidence that the Government will stand by its commitments. Can we really expect the Tamils to show confidence that the State will abide by the terms of a negotiated settlement?

It is certainly arguable that the LTTE has proved so intractable a problem up to now because of the undependability of the State. It may be that the LTTE itself has not been serious about a negotiated settlement because it really wants nothing short of Eelam. However its support base can be eroded because of the economic costs of its strategy to the Tamils in the North-East, and it can be progressively isolated as shown by the fact that practically every other Tamil party has turned against it. In other words, it is theoretically possible to force the LTTE into a situation where it has to accept something short of Eelam.

Why has that not been possible so far? It is obvious that the LTTE continues to have substantial support among the Tamils. Otherwise it cannot possibly function as the redoubtable guerrilla force that it is. Very probably the support is largely negative support, meaning that many Tamils cannot see an alternative to the LTTE because they believe that should it be completely destroyed the Tamils can expect to get little or nothing from the State. The LTTE can certainly argue that all the very terrible sufferings inflicted by the rebellion on the Tamils as well as others will go for nought if it lays down arms and negotiates a settlement while none can be sure that the State will abide by its terms. It can be argued therefore that the State's undependability stands in the way of the total erosion of support for the LTTE.

The insistence of the other Tamil parties on federalism and a North-East merger can also be explained in terms of the undependability of the State. We can ask why a minority should want anything more than fair and equal treatment when the majority itself wants no more than that. Why the Tamil insistence on devolution and a homeland when fair and equal treatment can be given without any such special arrangements? The Sinhalese belief is that the Tamils want such arrangements as stepping-stones towards Eelam. A more plausible answer is that the Tamils want

special arrangements to secure fair and equal treatment in the future as well, not just at present.

The term 'federalism' can be defined in different ways. What is practically important behind the Tamil demand for federalism is that the Government at the centre should not be able to dismiss the Provincial governments just as it likes, and nullify devolution. Under India's quasi-federalism system state governments have been dismissed willy-nilly, too often without regard for democratic norms. The post-1977 UNP State has been far more over-bearing, unprincipled, and undemocratic than the one in India, and the Tamils obviously fear that any system of devolution less than federalism will be made farcical in practice. Hence what looks like an unreasonable demand for federalism by all the Tamil parties except for Mr. Thondaman's CWC. The unanimous insistence on a North-East merger seems to have for its rationale a desire for sufficient living-space to which the Tamils in the South can gravitate should the State go back on a negotiated settlement. The root-problem behind the intransigence of the LTTE and what might look like excessive demands from the other Tamil parties is the undependability of the State.

I have argued in this article that the ethnic problem in its present militant form is not the result of the alleged communalism of the Sinhalese people but of State or UNP terrorism, behind which is the problem of a mad hierarchical drive in the State compounded by the anti-democracy of the post-1977 UNP. I have argued further that the root-problem preventing a negotiated settlement is the undependability of the State, which makes it questionable whether it will respect the sanctity and inviolability of agreements. In terms of those arguments, the ethnic problem has to be seen in terms of the peculiar character of the post-1997 UNP State. To solve the ethnic problem, therefore, we have to solve the problem of the State.

In looking for a way out of the present imbroglio, we must give central importance to one fact and try to make it decisive. It is the fact that in the ten years after 1983 the Sinhalese people have interacted peacefully with Tamils in the South in spite of the most extreme provocations. In my view that fact goes a long way to invalidate the claim to Eelam. For what is really important in establishing the claim to separate statehood is not the debatable historical ground for it but the question of whether the two communities can live together or not. The Sinhalese people have given

their answer. However, while the fact of peaceful interaction goes a long way to invalidate the claim to Eelam, it does not go the whole way because there is still the problem of the State. The Sinhalese and the Tamils may be able to live together, but the Tamils may not be able to live with the State.

It might seem to some Sri Lankans that the way out of the present imbroglio would be to negotiate a settlement under international auspices, including guarantees for its observance by the UN, SAARC, or the Commonwealth. They may be willing to offer themselves as mediators, but it is very doubtful that they will accept the role of guarantors as that will require an undertaking that they will intervene to force the State or the LTTE to observe the terms of the settlement. Furthermore, in agreeing to any such thing we will be agreeing in advance to a serious compromise of our sovereignty. Yet another point is that such agreements could misfire badly for the reason that should the State be seen to be going back on commitments other countries may come to feel that they should recognize Eelam.

There is no alternative to our dealing with the problem of the State if we are to get to grips with the ethnic problem. In terms of my definition of the ethnic problem as the problem of the State and not of the people, the conclusion can be drawn that the people's will must prevail over the State if the ethnic problem is to be solved. We have to assert the supremacy of the civil society over the State. In other words we must restore a fully functioning democracy, meaning not just that there are free and fair elections but also that the people have democratic rights enabling them to control, or at least influence, the State in between elections.

However, democracy may not by itself make the State solve the ethnic problem. The difficulty is that the power of the modern State, which we must remember has in its hands the means of legitimate violence against the people, can be very dreadful. We may have a fully functioning democracy and yet fail to control or influence the State to any significant extent. Democracy is the best conceivable answer to the age-old problem of tyranny. It is not a nostrum for all the ills of mankind. Democracy may help, but we have to go beyond it if we are to really promote a solution of the ethnic problem.

I believe that the crucial desideratum is public morality. As I have argued the essential problem is the

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THE TAMIL NATIONAL QUESTION IN SRI LANKA: SOME REFLECTIONS

Obstacles to Peace

by N. Shanmugaratnam

Continued from last issue.

Imposition of the Military Option and Geo-Politicisation of the National Question

The behaviour of the government in the wake of the violence of July 1983 once again showed that the government had failed to learn the lessons from the point of view of its own economic model and more importantly, the future of the Lankan society. Seeing its Sinhala Buddhist legitimacy at stake, the government went as far as it could to please the Sinhala chauvinist lobby which did not appear to be satisfied with the seven days of destruction and the exodus of more than 100,000 Tamils as refugees into India. The government amended the constitution to ban the demand for a separate Tamil state and unseat the TULF MPs from parliament. With this act of monumental temerity, the government closed the only direct channel of communication it had with the Tamil community. Thus was sealed the parliamentary road for the Tamils and any possibility of a negotiated solution. Now, the conflict's militarisation became inevitable. So was its more explicit geo-politicisation. By its short-sighted moves, the Lankan government had provided greater degrees of freedom and legitimacy to the Indian government to intervene in the conflict.

The anti-Tamil violence of July and the belligerence of the government drove thousands of Tamil boys and girls into the militant movements. These movements enjoyed support from the people and government of Tamil Nadu and the patronage of the central government to varying degrees. In the aftermath of July 1983, the Tamil liberation groups saw military training and arms as the immediate and the most important priority. This made them relegate basic political issues to a secondary or tertiary status. Putting the military above the

political, and therefore, failing to think and act politically toward the formation of a united front with a minimum program, all the main groups began to compete with each other for patronage from the Indian state. This competition was one of the factors that promoted internecine conflicts. As a result of their political underdevelopment and disunity, the militant organisations became easy victims of the machinations of the Indian state which sought a resolution of the Lankan conflict in a way that promoted, or did not undermine, its national interests.

The signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord was preceded by four years of devastating war in the North-East and some failed attempts at a negotiated settlement. The Accord was doomed to fail due to reasons that were quite obvious from the beginning. In the preceding years, war and ethno-nationalism had deepened the Sinhala-Tamil divide. The structural barriers that prevented Lankan governments from honouring the earlier two Pacts had become even stronger. Moreover, the situation on the Tamil side had changed dramatically compared to that of 1957 or 1965. Now the government had to deal not with a parliamentary party like the TULF but with movements challenging it militarily, which were at the same time locked in internecine conflicts. The TULF had been driven into oblivion, partly as a result of the government's ban and partly due to its inability to enter the armed struggle. The LTTE had gained supremacy by annihilating or militarily weakening the other groups. Unlike in the previous instances, when the resistance to the Pacts came only from the Sinhala side, now Tamil nationalism had turned more intense and militant. The LTTE was now the decisive force. With its militant Tamil Eelamism and military supremacy, it was in a position to effectively oppose any agreement to which it was not a party. The Tamil people themselves had become wary of the Sinhala leadership because it had reneged on its commitments on two previous occasions. The Accord itself was not a product of a process of negotiation and peace-making involv-

ing the Lankan government and the main Tamil organisations. Instead, it was signed by the Indian and Lankan governments without the participation of the LTTE or any other militant groups or the TULF and presented to the Tamils as a *fait accompli*. The Accord and the coming of the IPKF led to a war between the LTTE and IPKF in the North-East, a beleaguered Provincial Council with dwindling popularity at Trincomalee, and a new opportunist alliance between the Lankan government and the LTTE.

The JVP, SLFP and the Jathika Chinthanaya fringe attacked the government for signing a pact with 'expansionist India' and began a virulently chauvinist campaign. Predictably, the government openly sabotaged the Accord to appease the Sinhala chauvinist lobby. India found itself entrenched in an unpopular war in the Tamil speaking areas, and unable to keep its side of the bargain. India took upon itself a dubious dual role: as the grand patron of the Tamils and an 'honest broker' at the same time. At the end of the Accord-phase, its credibility was highly diminished in the first role and almost totally lost in the second. The outcome of the Accord - although it contained some of the basic elements for a viable solution to the national question - turned out to be disastrous for the Tamil people and for Peace in Sri Lanka. The war continues and with it the structural barriers to resolution of the conflict.

The Parliamentary Select Committee: A Prisoner of Sinhala Buddhist Hegemony

A more recent attempt came in the form of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) appointed by the government to find an all party consensus on a political solution to the national question. However, the two main Sinhala parties - UNP, i.e. the government itself, and SLFP - avoided presenting their proposals to the PSC and engaged themselves in moves behind the scenes to sabotage the whole process by flirting with the so-called Srinivasan proposal. Finally, when the exasperated Chairman decided to take a vote on the merger of the North and East, they demanded in one voice the de-merger of the two provinces against the consensus of the Tamil parties that had stated their case for the merger. At last, the UNP and SLFP took a united stand but, alas, only to make the whole exercise of the PSC futile. The point is not that the two regions should be merged without a Tamil-Muslim consensus but that the UNP and SLFP failed to offer any positive

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alternatives and participate in an open dialogue. The deliberations of the PSC showed that neither the UNP nor the SLFP had changed its old position or attitude even after all these years of bloodshed and destruction. They seem to be playing the same old cynical game of not giving a chance to the other to cry 'foul'.

Limits of Sinhala Ethno-nationalism

The Lankan society is well into the fourth decade of Sinhala Buddhism as the ruling ethno-nationalism. In 1956, Mr. Bandaranaike announced the coming of the era of the 'Common Man', of course. He and his successors promised to rectify the 'historical injustices' suffered by the Sinhalese people and to give them a better life. However, the majority of the Sinhalese people continue to suffer from inadequate and/or declining entitlements to varying degrees. The numbers of urban and rural poor have been growing in the Sinhala areas. The frustrations of the Sinhala rural youth have been growing in intensity due to unemployment and a deepening feeling of alienation from the mainstream of Sinhala politics. These frustrations found a violent expression in the JVP-led insurrection of 1971. The JVP phenomenon revived with greater violence in the 1980s. The Sinhalese people have experienced the brutal nature of the Sinhala-Buddhist state on many occasions since 1971. Since 1977, human rights violations have been increasing in the South. The Sinhalese society has been terrorised and brutalised by the state and the anti-state forces. All this shows that the ruling ethno-nationalism has failed to solve the basic problems for them and for their imagined enemies, i.e. the Tamils and Muslims.

The UNP seems to be adopting a strategy of not allowing a repeat of July 1983 in Colombo and of continuing the war in the North-East without letting it seriously damage the investment climate in the south. This is an attempt to continue with the economic policy without taking any decisive step to solve the national question. The price paid by the government and the society for this short-sighted opportunist option is tremendous. It includes reduced investment and economic growth rates, rising military and relief expenditures, loss of human lives, destruction of capital assets and loss of production in the North-East, loss of people's confidence in the government, and the continuation of authoritarianism and brutalisation. Experience shows that the war in the North-East cannot be

isolated from the rest of the society and that the whole country is affected. The current economic growth rate of four per cent is modest compared to the targets set by the government itself." It is a declared aim of the government to transform Lanka into a Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) like the southeast Asian states by the year 2000. This is simply unattainable at the present rate of growth and industrialisation. One of the factors preventing the government from achieving its aim even in a longer time-frame than it has set for itself is the political instability and disruptions caused by the war and the lack of a solution to the national question. Thus the price the Lankan society is paying is not for an economic miracle that will take it into the family of NICs in 2000 or later but to keep the structures of counter-productive authoritarianism and communalism intact for the UNP to be in power and for a few, including arms dealers, to accumulate wealth. This is a most telling indictment on the UNP government which has been ruling for sixteen years.

However, the current conjuncture does not provide any space for a revival of the populist economic policies of the past. On the other hand, it throws up the challenge of democratisation and development with social justice, which the SLFP, JVP and the other ethno-nationalist opposition groups are not capable of meeting. Only a secular, forward looking multi ethnic opposition can face up to this and other challenges.

Tamil Eelamism and Militarism: Disunity, Intolerance and Negation of Liberation

The Tamil Liberation struggle has been plagued by internecine conflicts, chauvinism, sectarianism and militarism. It has been cynically manipulated by the Indian state to serve its national interests. Tamil chauvinism and the divisive tactics of the Lankan state have created a serious Tamil-Muslim conflict. In the post-July 1983 phase, Tamil nationalism has been undergoing modifications in response to the coercive operations of the Sri Lankan state and the hegemonic needs of competing Tamil militant groups. From the early Tamil Eelamist phase (1972-83), the main militant groups had failed to reformulate the political discourse on Tamil Eelam in non-communalist terms to win the confidence of the Muslim people and the progressive forces in the South. The leading groups were content with calling the Muslims 'Islamic Tamils' without breaking away from the narrow Tamil ethnocentrism of the past. They

were not able to do away with the traditional Jaffna-centred practice of Tamil politics either; with time and with the rise of the LTTE as the *de facto* state in the areas under its control, Tamil Eelamism has turned into an exclusivist, chauvinist and militarist ideology within growing intolerance toward Muslim and Sinhala civilians. The chronicle of ethnic pogroms committed by Tamil militants from the Anuradhapura massacre of 1985 to the more recent Medirigiriya killings and the expulsion of the Muslim people from their traditional homelands in the North-East are among the most dangerous manifestations of a militarist Tamil Eelam chauvinism.⁹

The anti-Muslim violence has created deep feelings of insecurity among the Muslims and estranged them from the Tamil community. This has catalysed the growth of communalist forces among the Muslims. The Tamil people in the North-East have become the unfortunate captives of LTTE's coercive and ideological power apparatus. The vast majority of them have been forced to be the traumatised and silent spectators of a war in which the LTTE is claiming to be fighting on their behalf for their liberation. With the same apparatus of power, the Muslim people have been excluded from the homeland they have shared with the Tamils for centuries. All these constitute a negation of the liberation struggle and derailed the struggle from its appointed course and rendered the whole project of a free Tamil Eelam unfeasible. The Tamil-Muslim conflict has severely undermined the most vital Tamil demand for a merged North-East homeland, and created new obstacles to peace. After forty years of demanding a homeland and a decade of armed struggle, the Tamils of North-East are left with an irreparably damaged case for a merged territorial unit. It is a sad irony of the Tamil liberation struggle that, after ten years of a bloody war for Tamil Eelam, the Tamils have lost their moral and political grounds to claim a merged North-East territory. This self inflicted wound is the result of the failure of the Tamil leadership to unconditionally accept that the North-East is also the homeland of the Muslims.

However, Tamil nationalism will continue to thrive as long as the Tamil people remain oppressed by the Lankan state. The other side of this is that, in the present circumstances, the Tamils will remain repressed by the very nationalist forces claiming to be their liberators. A growing number of people in the North-East and their kith and kin residing outside yearn for

an early political settlement that will put an end to the gun-culture that has taken over the Tamil homeland. A distressing aspect of the war in the North-East is the continuing depopulation of the area. Death, displacement and the Tamil Diaspora are depleting the human resources of the Tamil society with serious socio-economic consequences. It seems that this demographic disruption is irreversible in the short-run.¹⁰

The progressive forces in the North-East are violently suppressed by both the Lankan state and the LTTE. The latter's sectarianism and militarist liquidationism have driven the politically more underdeveloped Tamil groups into collaborating with the state. By choosing to ally with the state, these groups have alienated themselves from the Tamil people and their cause and shown their inability to raise themselves to a higher political level and contribute to the growth of an alternative force in the North-East. A decade of Tamil struggle shows that the idea of a united front against the common enemy, i.e. the state, is totally alien to the main militant groups. The LTTE has consistently worked against a broader unity of the liberation forces and used all the force it could to thwart any move toward unity. The leftist groups that advocated a united front and a democratic program were very small, and physically constrained by the 'warlordism' of the dominant groups. However, the rise of a secular opposition in the South will provide a great stimulus for the activation of the progressive forces among the Tamils, and both of these in turn can be expected to inspire the forces fighting communalism among the Muslims. This link should serve as a basis to build a mass movement for de-communalizing the Lankan society.

Toward Peace and Resolution

Two broken Pacts, one failed Indo-Lanka Accord and a Parliamentary Select Committee that could not even find a consensus on a political solution, and almost four decades of lost time and opportunities – has it become impossible to find a solution to the Lankan national question?

Certainly, the national question has been rendered more intractable by the politics of ethno-nationalism as discussed above. Neither the government nor the main Sinhala opposition party has come forward with any viable proposition for a solution. The international community has virtually forgotten the Lankan conflict. The major donors have not gone beyond verbal expressions of concern while granting

almost normal 'development aid' to Sri Lanka. External pressures on the government for a solution seem to be negligible. This situation can easily breed despair among those groups and individuals working for justice and peace within the country. However, the current crisis has also revealed the limits of ethno-nationalism and the military option, and there are clear signs of a new conjuncture emerging.

The limits of the military option have begun to impose themselves in several ways contributing toward the birth of a new conjuncture. The morale of the state's military forces has been steadily declining in recent times. This is evidenced by the high incidence of desertions. The government is unable to find enough new recruits. It's patriotic appeals to the Sinhala youth to join the army and defend the 'motherland' are not received with enthusiasm any more. The financial and social costs of the war are becoming unbearable. In the North-East, gone are the days when Tamil boys and girls flocked in their hundreds to join liberation movements. Internecine conflicts and fratricide have disillusioned the older Tamil youth and shattered their dreams of a free Tamil Eelam. The dominant trend among them is one of emigration. Most of LTTE's new recruits belong to the 12-16 years bracket. The people have become war-weary. Of course, these are negative outcomes that push the question of peace to the forefront. They do not in themselves inspire any optimism. However, there are some positive signs too. Progressive Tamil Muslim and Sinhalese groups are striving to build alliances to struggle for a viable democratic solution to the national question. The presence in the South of hundreds of thousands of Tamils and Muslims displaced from the North-East gives an opportunity for the progressives to work among all three communities to re-build ethnic harmony and mobilise the displaced people to join the struggle for a democratic solution. Signs of hope are also emerging from the grass-roots due to the dedicated work of our peace activists.

Grass-roots Activism

The power of ethno-nationalism as a communalist ideology cannot effectively be challenged without creating an alternative pluralist political culture and a freer civil society. The world-views of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communalism have to be challenged by popularising alternative pluralist and secular world views. This is a major task for the progressive forces in the country. In the last ten years, some organisations have addressed the challenge of promoting pluralist

values and launched their campaigns at the local level. The Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE), social movements linked to Christian organisations and human rights groups in different parts of the country are among the more active bodies. The left political formations that have successfully resisted the corrupting influence of ethno-nationalism have been holding aloft the banner of secularism and equality against many odds.¹¹ Some members of the Buddhist clergy have dared to go against the Buddhist establishment and join movements for justice and peace. In the South, opposition newspapers, mostly Sinhala weeklies and monthlies, have become alternative sources of information for the public on the war in the North-East, human rights violations, economy and other important questions.¹² Some of them (for example *Yukthiya* and *Ravaya*) are actively campaigning for a just solution to the national question, for peace and against communalism. These activities, taking place within a communalised civil society which is highly constrained by state interventions, are attempts at challenging the hegemony of ethno-nationalism. Their experiences need to be analysed with reference to their impact and to the political and cultural needs of de-communalizing society and secularising the state. They have to be linked to the major project of resolving the national question and reconstructing Lanka as a multi ethnic people's democracy.

Toward a Multi-ethnic Democracy

The crisis has exposed the demerits of the unitary state which has been put to much abuse by majoritarian communalism. The minorities view the unitary state as an instrument that has served the Sinhala ruling parties to condemn them to second class citizenship with the consent of an ideologically manipulated Sinhala electorate. Recognition of this reality is one of the preconditions for a dialogue toward resolving the current conflict. It implies that we need a macro institutional framework to allow autonomy for the North-East to meet the aspirations of the Tamils and the Muslims. The framework should provide for institutional mechanisms to safeguard the interests of the Tamils and Muslims in the South and the Sinhalese in the North-East. Federalism has re-entered the debate although the two main Sinhala parties have shied away from it under various pretexts. The peace movement and the left and social movements should seize

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the opportunity to relate federalism to the larger question of de-communalisation and secularisation, democratisation and social change and work for a popular consensus on these issues. They should actively challenge ethno-nationalism and evolve a more dynamic concept of pluralism going beyond mutual tolerance toward equality of ethnies and a higher common Lankan identity as a basis for a new consciousness. Otherwise, federalism may remain an abstract framework without clearly stated contents. Furthermore, autonomous units for Tamils and Muslims in the North-East can only be a part of the solution. For the challenges are even greater in many areas of the South and in parts of the East where the society is multi-ethnic. In short, the conditions are ripe for a multi-ethnic agenda for peace and reconstruction.

In a country like Sri Lanka, people's democracy takes us to the heart of the question of empowerment of men and women to command the resources needed to satisfy their basic needs and to meaningfully involve themselves in the political life of the society through participation at local community or work-place levels and in larger movements. Such empowerment involves material and intellectual components as well as individual and collectivist pursuits. The material component includes defensible access to productive assets, remunerative work and other entitlements that enhance the economic security of persons. The intellectual includes access to education and means of developing one's personal capabilities. Given its class, ethnic, caste, gender and community dimensions, this empowerment can not be facilitated by the 'free markets' advocated by liberalism. The latter in its conventional form rests on the reductionist idea of the atomised self-interested individual – the 'rational economic man' – and fails to recognise the importance of collective action and altruistic behaviour in building a social order. As an ideology, it obfuscates real inequalities in society by positing an abstract equality of individuals as free economic agents in the market place and maximisers of utility or profit.

Instead of the unreal 'rational economic man', people's democracy takes the real human actors in their particular settings as subjects of history and seeks social change through them by political awareness creation and action. Among the immediate concerns of this political learning process are de-communalisation and secularism. The questions that loom large are

related to the re-politicisation of workers, rural producers and students; development of people's science and cultural movements; and building a feminist movement. All these are activities located in civil society and aimed at liberating it from the strangle-hold of the state and changing the balance of political forces in favour of an alternative popular, democratic political culture. Our notion of people's democracy gives deeper and dynamic meanings to self-determination at national, sub-national and individual levels as it means decentralisation of power and decision making to eliminate discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, religion, caste or gender. Here, self determination implies popular sovereignty and accountability which can not be realised without recognising the fact that individuals find themselves incorporated into a multiplicity of power centres at micro, mezo and macro levels (such as the family, work-place, community and other social networks, and nations) and developing appropriate means of power-sharing at all these levels.¹²

People's democracy cannot progress without dynamic, sustainable and equitable economic development. This cannot be achieved by replacing the economic policy of the present government by the populist economic policy of the past. That can only take the society backward. To go forward, we need to think creatively and arrive at a development strategy based on a thorough understanding of the contradictory and complementary relations between the state, markets and communities within parameters set by values of people's democracy. There is no valid empirical or theoretical reason to eschew markets *per se* as permanently evil. Markets can be used as a part of the institutional mechanisms to empower individuals and groups within a people's democratic framework. The present government's economic policy needs to be critically evaluated in this light without any populist-nationalist pre-suppositions. These issues should become a part of the debate on the current crisis.

Notes:

⁷ In the wake of the July violence, the President and his ministers did very little to console the victims. Instead, they made rabidly chauvinist public speeches. They revived the slogans linking the Tamil people's demand for rights and their struggle to the history of South Indian invasions and to modern Indian expansionism.

⁸ This growth rate does not account for the material and human degradation and losses that continue. And it is no indicator of the well-being of the people.

⁹ For a long time, there were rumours that some of these massacres were carried out by

Tamil militants at the command of RAW, the intelligence arm of the Indian state. There is growing circumstantial evidence to suggest that RAW had a hand in, at least, one major massacre. Rajan Hoole, the eminent human rights activist, chronicler and analyst, says: 'there is testimony from other militant leaders as well as circumstantial evidence to suggest that the LTTE carried out the Anuradhapura massacre of April 1985 at the behest of the Indian RAW,' (Pravada, February 1993).

¹⁰ The gravity of this problem becomes more evident when one considers the needs of reconstruction of the North-East after the war. The re-development of the devastated infra structure and economy will require human resources of various kinds. The physical structures lost due to the war are more easily replaceable than the skilled human resources lost, especially when the loss is too big in scale for a population as small as the Lankan Tamils. Loss of skilled persons in a situation where the education and training infrastructures have become dysfunctional implies a temporary stagnation or even regression of the productive forces of the society. On the other hand, the productive forces may progress faster if a large number of the expatriate skilled persons returned to participate in reconstruction.

¹¹ These groups include the Maoist CP led by the late Sanmugathasan, NSSP led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara and several smaller Marxist groups mostly of Trotskyist and Maoist orientations. In the South, they have admirably withstood the murderous onslaught from the JVP. In the North-East they continue to face the fascist violence of the LTTE which has killed or imprisoned some of the best Tamil Marxist revolutionaries who fought for the rights of the Tamils while at the same time opposing the narrow nationalism of the LTTE. Regarding the old left, it may be noted that the LSSP has recently taken a firm stand in support of the merger of the North-East and an early political solution and against Sinhala chauvinism.

¹² These include Yukthiya, Ravaya, and Lak-diva.

¹³ Popular sovereignty should not be confused with the notion of 'popular will' which implies the consent of a numerical majority irrespective of the class, ethnic, caste, racial, gender or regional differences that may remain uncaptured by that so called popular will. Popular sovereignty is exercised through decentralised participation and involves accountability at all levels of decision making. The following critique of actually existing democracy in the developed capitalist countries by Bowles and Gintis illuminates our point: 'Democratic institutions have often been mere ornaments in the social life of the advanced capitalist nations; proudly displayed to visitors, and admired by all but used sparingly, the places where things really get done – in such core institutions as families, armies, factories, and offices – have been anything but democratic. Representative government, civil liberties, and due process have, at best, curbed the more glaring excesses of these realms of unaccountable power while often obscuring and strengthening underlying forms of privilege and domination.' (Bowles and Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism*, Harper Collins 1987).

THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

by T.N. Gopalan, Madras

● New Turn in Indo-China Relations

The agreement between India and China on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is significant in many respects.

The agreement signed on September 7 in Beijing, during Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to China, marks almost a formal end to the Cold War between the two countries, stretching back to the late fifties.

Secondly the agreement, with all its limitations, has demonstrated to the outside world that two Third World nations can try and sort out the problems between them by entering into direct negotiations, obviating the need for brokering by any major power.

Even more important, the pact should come as a whiff of fresh air for the beleaguered Rao government. It may be noted here that the two-year-old minority regime led by the ageing P.V. Narasimha Rao has been singularly lack-lustre – apart from the liberalisation drive it has embarked upon, the Centre has not done much to

endear itself to the masses or even to the intelligentsia.

If anything ever since the Babri Masjid demolition and stockbroker Harshad Mehta's sensational allegations against the Prime Minister, the government has only been lurching from one crisis to another without any clues on the way out.

In the circumstances the LAC agreement could be termed as the first significant achievement for the Rao government in any sphere, foreign or domestic. It does mark the beginning of a new phase in the bilateral relations based on mutual confidence and better political understanding. It also strengthens India's capacity to exercise its options in matters of defence and security.

Pending a final boundary settlement, the two countries have agreed to respect and observe the LAC besides cutting down on the armed forces along the LAC in conformity with the principle of 'mutual and equal security'. Finer details of the reduction in

forces are to be worked out in due course.

Yet again the pact provides for prior intimation of military exercises above thresholds and adequate measures against air intrusions.

It also explicitly states that the references to the LAC do not prejudice the respective positions of the two countries on the thorny boundary issue. Efforts for a lasting solution in this regard would continue.

It may be recalled here that since the devastating armed conflicts between these two countries in 1962 – which so completely demoralised Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and perhaps even hastened his end – this is the first time they have sought to grapple with the problems before them.

Incidentally it has been claimed that the three-and-a-half page agreement containing eight articles – apart from a brief preface – has been entered into in consonance with the five principles of Panchsheel, propounded during Mr. Nehru's visit to China in 1954.

In his talks with his Chinese counterpart, Mr. Li Peng, Mr. Rao even suggested that the two countries observe the 40th anniversary of Panchsheel next year. The latter's response however, is not known.

Some observers are of the opinion that the supervision and verification of force reduction from the border areas could prove a tough time for India. Anyway the exercise bristles with a number of difficulties, it is felt.

But then the fact remains that apart from the LAC itself, the agreement is quite noteworthy for the parallel pledge by the two sides to renounce force as well as threat of force as an instrument of State policy in their bilateral relations.

The potential of the accord to afford India a new opportunity to review, if not plan, its future political and economic development strategies is extremely alluring.

The 1962 war perhaps marked the beginning of the decline of India's economic development and the narrowing of its political options. Its defence budget in 1963 soared to more than Rs.1,100 crores from a measly Rs.350 crores the previous year and this has steadily escalated ever since. One can easily imagine the impact on developmental work, especially for a resource-strapped nation like India.

Politically too, the conflict with China has cost India a lot. The estranged

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Tamil problem. According to Gopalaswamy's supporters in the DMK, now Karunanidhi is using the Tiger issue to jettison Gopalaswamy with a view to promoting his son's elevation in the party's hierarchy.

Karunanidhi now says that the Sri Lankan Tamil problem could and should be settled among Tamil groups and the Colombo government by negotiation and that he was in favour of self-rule for Tamils on the pattern of the agreement between the PLO and Israel.

Another fallout from this dispute has been the number of immolations. At least five people have attempted to immolate themselves following the eruption into the open of the wrangle between Karunanidhi and Gopalaswamy. These attempts were a show of support by loyal party men to the party's leader and his main detractor.

Three attempts at immolation by setting fire to themselves came in the wake of Karunanidhi's announcement on 7 September to retire from politics and devote his time to literary and social activities. However, following protests and appeals from his party colleagues and supporters he withdrew his reported retirement within 36 hours. Answering pressmen, he regretted that some partymen should

have doubted the genuineness of the alleged LTTE threat and criticised his acceptance of security protection. Such persons had nothing to say when the Tamil Nadu Congress(I) president Mr. K. Ramamurthy and Janatha Party president, Dr. Subramanian Swamy were provided personal security. 'This makes me feel that they are not concerned about my life', Mr. Karunanidhi said.

A fifty-year-old man Krishnaswamy set himself ablaze at Salem and suffered severe burns before he was rescued from death. He was a branch secretary of the DMK and could not bear the pain at Karunanidhi's proposal to retire from politics. Murthi, a 35-year-old man from Thiruvannamalai did the same thing for the same reason. He was saved by bystanders and taken to hospital. A youth named Dhanapal made an attempt in front of the residence of Karunanidhi before he was saved by other party workers.

Pannerchelvam from Kamaarajapuram village, a keen supporter of Gopalaswamy, doused himself with kerosene and lit it in protest against the attempted expulsion of Gopalaswamy from the DMK. Another supporter of Gopalaswamy, Idimalai Udayan, set fire to himself at Thirumanoor bus station, 30 miles from Tiruchirappalli. He was saved by passengers and taken to hospital.

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neighbour, a major power in its own right, inevitably looked around for allies in its manoeuvres against India. Today China is a major supplier of not just arms, but nuclear and missile technology to Pakistan which will continue to remain daggers drawn against India for a very, very long time to come. In this sense too the defusion of tension between China and India, even if to a very limited extent, should come as a ray of hope for the Indian policy-makers.

For instance the LAC agreement implies Chinese acquiescence on the annexation/incorporation of Sikkim into India. After the signing of the accord the Indian spokesperson would only say: 'The Chinese response was balanced, flexible and constructive.' But abiding by the LAC does mean that China will not seriously dispute the Indian position on Sikkim - thus far it had taken the stance that Beijing and Gangtok would settle the issue for themselves.

Since the 1962 conflict, China has actually claimed some 90,000 sq.km. of 'Indian territory' and India still stakes its claim to 30,000 sq.km. ceded to Pakistan by China.

In this context the accord is indeed a breakthrough. From LAC to Sikkim to Kashmir and arms supply to Pakistan is not an impassably long distance.

Since China is, after all, known for its hard-headed pragmatism, especially so in this unipolar world in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and its allies, it could be trusted to work for further improvement in the bilateral relations. As if to stress this point, the two countries signed three other agreements at the same time, on environmental co-operation, on radio and television co-operation and a protocol on extension of border trade.

There are dissenting voices nevertheless. While asserting that there is nothing historic about the accord - since it only 'formalises the informal arrangement in existence since 1979' - the BJP has contended that given the differences in terrain and access to logistical facilities, there cannot be a symmetry in the reduction of forces by the two sides. It has also protested against any attempt at 'recognising' the LAC as the formal border.

But a surprising spoil-sport is Mr. George Fernandes, MP. A senior Janata Dal leader and an old socialist, he was always known for his anti-imperialist, anti-jingoist stance. For him to shoot down the accord as a 'betrayal' of Indians, as he has done now, is a bit disturbing.

He has found fault with Mr. Rao for not doing anything to get the 'vast chunk of Indian territory grabbed by China' returned. He has also noted that China has never accepted Arunachal Pradesh as part of Indian territory.

And quite a few others, along with Mr. Fernandes, have regretted that India did not take any clear-cut stand on the 'human rights violations' in

Tibet.

But then as the President of the Communist Party of China, Mr. Jiang Zemin, put it: 'In recent years the two countries have undergone a good deal of suffering... The population of the two is two-fifths of the world's total and they have to develop relations not only in conformity with their basic interests but in the overall interests of peace and stability in the region...'

● Ayodhya: BJP Leaders Face 'Criminal Conspiracy' Charge

NEW DELHI - Top-ranking leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party and other pro-Hindu organizations have been charged with a criminal conspiracy to demolish the Babri mosque in Ayodhya last December.

The charges were filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation against 40 people in a special court in Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh.

Among those accused were BJP President, L.K. Advani; former President Murli Manohar Joshi; Vishnu Hindu Parishad leaders Vishnu Hari Dalmia and Ashok Singhal, and Bal Thackeray, chief of the Shiv Sena.

'Politically Motivated'

The BJP called the charges 'politically motivated' and said they were timed to influence voters in the four northern states that will hold legislative elections next month.

Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh were ruled by the party when the mosque, which Hindus believed was originally a temple, was brought down by mobs, allegedly at the instigation of militant Hindu leaders.

The BJP leaders maintained that the demolition was a spontaneous action of the crowd and denied it had been planned. But a CBI spokesman said that investigators had collected substantial evidence to establish a case of conspiracy.

Soon after the demolition, the four state governments were dismissed and the areas brought directly under New Delhi's rule.

Among others charged were former U.P. Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, who had pledged in court to protect the mosque; a BJP Member of Parliament, Uma Bharati; Bajrang Dal chief Vinay Katiyar; a Shiv Sena MP, Moreshwar Save; former Faizabad district magistrate R.N. Shrivastav and the former senior police superintendent for Faizabad, D.R. Rai.

Besides criminal conspiracy, all

were charged with intentional destruction, defiling of a place of worship, criminal trespass and intimidation of public servants, the CBI spokesman said, after 850 witnesses and 705 documents were examined.

BJP spokesman Krishanlal Sharma said the government had taken this step 'out of frustration' after failing in attempts to force through a bill delinking religion from politics. He added that it automatically made Ayodhya an issue in the coming elections.

In April the CBI raided offices of the Shiv Sena and VHP in 10 towns in three states and Delhi. The raids, it said, led to much corroborative evidence of a 'criminal conspiracy' and 'large-scale involvement of the organized leadership' in the mosque's destruction.

The Congress Party has denied that the CBI acted with an eye on the elections. Party spokesman V.N. Gadgil said:

'Everything is not election-oriented. Certain things are done when they ought to be done.'

Asked whether the leaders charged were likely to be arrested, he replied: 'They can be summoned by the court. It is not necessary to arrest them.'

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Tamil Nadu Newsletter

by T.N. Gopalan, Madras

● Jayalalitha Humbles DMK & Cong-I

In an unexpected turn of events, the embattled Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has come up trumps – her party, the AIADMK, has won both the by-elections held in the state on September 20, one for the Palani Lok Sabha constituency and another for the Ranipet Assembly seat.

What makes the victories significant is that she won in the face of all round allegations of corruption and the rupture in her party's alliance with the Cong-I.

For Ms. Jayalalitha who is facing a possible threat of disqualification, the electoral triumph should be doubly sweet – for the unequivocal assertion that her popularity with the masses is still very much intact and for the bloody nose given to the Cong-I and the DMK. While the former was claiming that without its support the AIADMK would be humbled at the hustings, the latter was crowing that Ms. Jayalalitha was a fading star and it was time for the 'genuine Dravidian forces' to get back to the centre-stage of Tamil Nadu politics.

Of the 10,12,516 voters in the Palani Lok Sabha constituency, as many as 66.31 per cent had exercised their franchise, 3,50,134 of them being men and the rest women. Even though 47 candidates were in the fray, the main contenders were from the AIADMK, the DMK and the Cong-I.

Ever since the creation of the constituency in 1977, the Cong-I had been bagging it without fail – in all the five elections held earlier – of course with the support of either the DMK or the AIADMK. This was the first time the party faced the electorate on its own, and it fielded a son of a local landlord who had won four times from the same constituency, and with a huge majority every time. It was the death of this landlord which had caused the by-election. Perhaps the Cong-I hoped to cash in on the 'image' of the father. But then, as it turned out, the party fared miserably, coming a poor third in all the six Assembly segments. Its tally of 1,30,699 votes against the AIADMK's 2,78,877 is a glimpse of its stock with the electorate. Only two years ago the Cong-I candidate had triumphed by a whopping margin of 2.5 lakh votes, albeit with the AIADMK support and in the wake of the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Certainly it is a moment of reckoning for the Cong-I, which has been riding piggy-back thus far on either of

the two major Dravidian parties, the AIADMK or the DMK has suddenly started nursing ambitions of making it to Fort St. George (the seat of government secretariat) on its own after a lapse of 25 years and more. The DMK had fielded Mrs. Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, a minister in the last Karunanidhi cabinet and who was detained under the anti-terrorist laws for her alleged role in enabling the escape of the perpetrators of the cruel massacre of 14 EPRLF leaders including Mr. Padmanabha in May 1990.

It has indeed acquitted itself well since it lost the race by a mere 44,843 votes against the huge margins of previous elections. Still it is a serious loss of face to Mr. M. Karunanidhi, the DMK chief, that even in a three-way battle he should be unable to get the better of the charisma of Ms. Jayalalitha.

In the case of Ranipet, 1,47,692 voters, 71 per cent of the electorate, had cast their votes. The AIADMK candidate, a local functionary, romped home by a margin of over 12,000 votes, defeating the former minister and a senior DMK leader Arcot N. Veerasamy. The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a party of Vanniars, a dominant backward caste of the northern parts of Tamil Nadu polled an impressive 26,481 votes, only going to prove that the formation of the party (only four years ago) is a great setback to the DMK – both the DMK and the PMK seem to be appealing to Tamil nationalist sentiments, and Vanniars used to form a major chunk of the DMK constituency till recently.

The Congress did put up a candidate in the first instance, but he retired from the contest mid-way, sparking off speculations of a tacit understanding between it and the DMK.

In fact after the election results were out, Mr. A. Nallasivan, secretary of the Tamil Nadu unit of the CPM, an ally of the DMK, wondered whether perhaps the latter had indeed arrived at some such understanding – that the Cong-I would support it in Ranipet and it would reciprocate the gesture in Palani. Noting that in the initial stages the DMK campaign was very slow and lack-lustre, he felt the 'perception' of a Cong-I-DMK understanding proved the undoing of the DMK.

Predictably Mr. Karunanidhi dismissed such allegations as baseless and sought to draw some cold comfort



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalalitha

from the fact that there was an 11 per cent decline in the AIADMK votes in Ranipet and that in Palani the DMK had made a lot of strides since 1991.

Of course the one-time-MGR's screen-flame-turned-Chief Minister is too elated for words. When every kind of poll pundit was claiming that her popularity had taken a nose-dive and that sans the Cong-I support she would come a cropper, she threw herself with zest into the campaign and surprised one and all by her victories.

It may be recalled here that during the run-up to the elections there were widespread speculations that the Centre had made up its mind to sack the AIADMK government on charges of corruption and for allowing the LTTE to 're-infiltrate' into the state.

Also there were those like Dr. Subramanyam Swamy, the arch-manipulator of the Indian politics, who were believed to have advised Prime Minister Narasimha Rao against testing the electoral waters but to first dismiss the Jayalalitha government keep the Assembly in suspended animation and then engineer a split in the AIADMK. Mr. Rao with his famous indecisiveness kept humming and hawing, to his own grief as it has turned out now. Any attempt to destabilise the state government at this juncture could prove very unpopular and also unproductive for the Cong-I.

But then it is not as if it is the end of the road for the party. There are those like Mr. G.K. Moopanar, a respected state Cong-I leader, who feel that only by ploughing a lonely furrow could the Congress rebuild itself and offer itself as a viable alternative before the people. Never mind the defeats in the

Continued on page 23

interim, they seem to feel, when both the Dravidian parties stand discredited, the Congress will stand to gain.

As for the DMK it is really puzzled. It cannot figure out how the AIADMK managed to win, and with a comfortable margin at that, in a constituency like Ranipet with a strong Muslim presence when Ms. Jayalalitha has been seen to be pandering to the Hindu revivalist sentiments, witness her pro-Kar Seva speech at the National Integration Council (before the Babri Masjid demolition in December – the Kar Seva was organised by

the Hindu fundamentalists and aimed at demolishing the masjid) and her overtures to the BJP. Anyway there could be some rethinking on forging an alliance with the PMK.

Finally it is not going to be all rosy for the AIADMK. Ms. Jayalalitha's *bete noire*, Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan could still hold her election to the Assembly invalid. The inquiry into charges of corruption on a coal import deal could reveal quite a few skeletons in the cupboard.

More important than anything else, the Cong-I and the DMK could in

course of time, enter into a pact. For the two by-election results conclusively prove that the Cong-I is still a crucial factor in the elections – whichever party it aligns itself with would be a sure winner in any election. If the DMK bows to such an understanding of the situation and goes in for an alliance with the Cong-I, unmindful of the criticism such a step might provoke, it will be tough times for Ms. Jayalalitha. Anyway the intelligentsia is highly disenchanted over her style of functioning, and it will not be too very long before such feelings percolate down to the masses.

Continued from page 13

undependability of the State, which can make the Tamils question whether there is any point in reaching a negotiated settlement when they know that the State can with impunity go back on it. What is required is a thorough-going ethical cleansing of the UNP, and respect for standards of public morality to the extent that it becomes inconceivable that there will ever again be another Udugampola affair. It is only in that situation that we can expect to reach a meaningful negotiated settlement, backed by trust and confidence on all sides that it will be properly implemented.

The ethnic problem in its present militant form is the consequence of the collapse of public morality under the post-1977 UNP State, and it will never be solved without a restoration of that morality. As I have shown, the problem took on a militant form after the post-1977 pogroms, the expression of State or UNP terrorism. There was a terrifying collapse of public morality behind those pogroms of the period between 1977 and 1983. That collapse had to lead to the disintegration of the State, because no society can hold together without standards of public morality. Anyone looking at the literature on moral theory will find that that point is not argued in full because it is taken as self-evident.

I will provide only a quotation from Bertrand Russell who was always a hard-headed rationalist in his philosophical writings. In his book *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* published in 1954 he pointed out that ethical beliefs throughout recorded history, have had two very different sources, one political and the other personal. He went on to write: 'Without civic morality communities perish; without personal morality their survival has no value.' Russell would not have been in the least surprised that Sri Lanka has been in a state of disintegration for several years, the

writ of the State not extending beyond Vavuniya. And he would have hooted with laughter at the idea of our trying to put the pieces together again without trying to restore elementary standards of public morality.

The public must demand a thorough ethical cleansing of the UNP. It is a mass Party backed by millions of the ordinary decent folk of Sri Lanka, and it has at its highest echelons some politicians of fine human quality who mean well by this country. They probably understand the importance of purging the 1977 UNP from the body politic of Sri Lanka and restoring the party of the Senanayakes and Kotlawela. However the degeneracy of our political life since 1977 has been so great that their task as regenerators will be uphill. The public must therefore back them in a programme of ethical cleansing. The alternative might be the final disintegration of Sri Lanka under the aegis of the post-1977 UNP State.

The solution of the problem posed by the State in relation to the ethnic problem requires both democracy and the restoration of public morality. In addition, it will help very greatly if the functions of the State are limited as much as possible. Peaceful Sinhala-Tamil interaction outside the State suggests that the greater the area of that interaction the greater the prospects for ethnic harmony. We should therefore move in the direction of what is called 'limited Government', towards an ideal situation in which the functions of the Government are limited to the maintenance of law and order and the building of roads and public lavatories.

It may be that what is really important for the health, wealth, and happiness of humankind is not the form of government but the degree of government. All Sri Lankans who have actually experienced the horror of the post-1977 UNP State, and who are

still in their right senses, will agree. The principle of 'limited government' is relevant for ethnic problems, because the experience of several South East Asian and other countries shows very clearly that the less the extent of Government the greater the prospects for ethnic harmony. I will not expand on that point as this article is already too long. I leave it to the interested reader to consult the books of the black American economist Thomas Sowell which are available in the American Library in Colombo.

The paradigm shift proposed in this article does not include a blue-print for a solution. One can think of several possible solutions, with or without devolution and with or without merger, that are thoroughly equitable for all our communities. There will be no point in them as long as there is no confidence that the State will respect the sanctity and inviolability of agreements.

The paradigm shift proposed here is based on the principle that to solve a problem we must address the problem, not something else. The core-problem is the undependability of the State, not just what many Sinhalese see as the intransigence and excessive demands of the Tamil parties. Therefore the pre-condition for a solution is the correction of the State through democracy, the restoration of standards of public morality, and I believe 'limited government'.

Very probably the historians of the future will write of our ethnic conflict as a tale of two tigers. We have been preoccupied with the tiger which has been on the rampage in the North and East, with occasional forays into the South in the form of bomb-blasts and assassinations. We have failed to recognize the tiger within the gates, the State. For a solution to the ethnic problem we certainly have to defang the tiger in the North-East. We also have to defang the State.

(Courtesy: Lanka Guardian).

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● MP Opposes Repatriation of Refugees

Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakara, the Nava Sama Samaja Party leader and a member of the Sri Lankan parliament, has strongly denounced the repatriation of the Tamil refugees from Tamil Nadu.

Addressing a meeting organised by the Indo-Sri Lankan Friendship Society at Madurai on September 4, the fire-brand MP noted that there were more than six lakh 'internally displaced' Lankan Tamils in the North and East and that the so-called welfare centres meant to shelter the displaced were almost a farce.

To send back the innocent refugees at a time when the conflict between the LTTE and the Lankan armed forces was continuing was totally inhuman, he further said, and called upon the opposition in Tamil Nadu to take the matter seriously and fight the injustice meted out to the refugees. For his part, he promised to raise the issue in the Lankan parliament.

Justifying the Lankan Tamils' struggle for justice, the MP said it was the unabashed chauvinism and unmitigated perfidy of the Sinhalese leaders down the years which had set off the fratricidal conflict.

However, he cautioned the Lankan Tamils to realise that there were large sections of Sinhalese masses who were sympathetic to the Tamil problems and wanted them to identify those political forces which represented those sections. Only an alliance with the fair-minded and progressive Sinhalese political forces could bring about the liberation of the suffering Tamils, he felt.

The NSSP leader had several rounds of talks with leaders of some left political parties at Madras, it is learnt, in an attempt to chalk out a common programme of action on the Lankan Tamils' issue.

Mr. Thirunavukkarasu, a member of the politbureau of the NSSP, who accompanied Mr. Nanayakara, told this correspondent that his party would shortly release a white paper on the conditions in the refugee camps and welfare centres in the island.

Meanwhile the state government continued to crack down on Lankan Tamil refugees living outside the camps. The latest to face its wrath is Mr. R.R. Sivalingam, a retired Lankan government official and one who has been ceaselessly striving for bettering the lot of the plantation Tamils repatriated under the Sirimavo-Shastri pact.

At the time of his arrest he was

actively involved in attending to the problems of the repatriates settled in Nilgiris. He had apparently fallen foul of the district administration in the process and he has now been taken into custody under the Foreigners Act. However, informed sources say, officials hostile to his efforts had trumped up false charges of his links with a banned militant group and advised the government to get rid of him fast – of course no evidence could be proffered on this score.

He was subsequently removed to the Special Camp (an euphemism for prison) in Chengalpattu where around 150 Lankan Tamil refugees are already

★ Round-Up of Tamils After Recovery of Suicide Bomb-Kit in Colombo

Scores of young Tamils, both male and female, have been daily rounded up in cordon-and-search operations in Colombo and its suburbs following the recovery of a suicide body-bomb-kit found by a 16-year-old boy at the Modera beach on 7 October. Colombo news papers daily report these arrests which sometimes run into their hundreds.

According to police sources, the bomb, containing 3.5 kilos of RDX plastic high explosives and about a kilo of neatly packed ball-bearings was sewn into a specially tailored denim pair of shorts. The boy found the bomb in an aluminium box floating in the surf and informed his uncle who in turn informed the police.

'Luckily for the boy and the uncle, neither of them had meddled with the two switches found stitched to the pair of short trousers. Had they done so, the bomb would have been activated blowing them to pieces in a massive explosion', said Detective Superintendent Lionel Gunatilleke, Director of the Crime Detection Bureau whose officers are investigating the case.

According to Mr. Gunatilleke, the discovery of the bomb meant to be worn by either a male or female suicide bomber, followed a cordon-and-search operation carried out in Modera area by police on the previous day, 6 October. 'We believe that either the bomber or someone who sheltered him panicked and threw away the bomb-kit fearing a search of his/her premises by police', he said.

'This is the first time that a suicide-bomb of this nature was found intact either in India or Sri Lanka. Both the former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv

dettained.

Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer and many other human rights activists have already appealed for his release. Following a writ in the High Court Mr. Sivalingam has since been admitted to a government hospital in the city for treatment for his coronary problems.

The Organisation for the Protection of the Tamils of Eelam from Genocide and other Violations of Human Rights (PROTEG) has also protested the 'summary withdrawal of refugee status' to many inmates of the refugee camps in the state and pointed out that no specific charges have been framed against them. Still they were languishing for nearly two years now, it said and demanded their release.

Gandhi and President Premadasa were killed by suicide bombers of the LTTE using similar bombs', a senior Defence official said. He said that the only difference in the bomb-kits used in both these assassinations was that they were worn round the chests of the bombers whereas the one found at Modera was in a pair of shorts.

'It was to be worn as an undergarment by a member of any sex and was specially tailored with elastic bands to fit anyone of any size', Mr. Gunatilleke said. It appeared to him that the 'terrorists' were changing their tactics to avoid detection and concealing their explosives in trousers instead of wearing round the chest.

The bomb, which could have been activated by either one of two pull-down type switches hidden in the trouser pockets was powered by two nine volt mini-batteries. Two spare batteries were also found along with a light emitting diode (LED) which was used to test the circuit.

A team of Indian investigators are reported to be already in Colombo to examine the bomb-kit found at Modera with a view to comparing it with the remnants of the bomb-kit worn by the assassin in the Rajiv Gandhi killing and to study the LTTE's technology in bomb-making.

Meanwhile the police are hunting for a 35-year-old ex-policeman, identified as PC 15995 Muthukumar Mahendran, who vacated his post in 1984 after serving in many police stations in and around Colombo. Police believe that he too was involved in the plan to assassinate President Premadasa and Lalith Athulathmudali. 'We believe that he not only knows the identities of some of the suicide bombers in Colombo, but also where the bomb-kits have been stacked away for future use', a senior police officer said.

READERS FORUM

EDITORIAL

In the Editorial of the July issue of the *Tamil Times* you have stated that 'with the enactment of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution which required Members of Parliament to forswear the advocacy of a separate state, the TULF MPs who refused to take the required oath were literally ousted from Parliament'.

I do not think that this passage reflects a correct statement of facts. I have not known of any instance when the TULF MPs refused to take the oath and were therefore ousted from Parliament. I have discussed this aspect with a number of others who also do not know of any instance when this is supposed to have happened. I shall be deeply grateful if you would give an instance when the TULF MPs, or anyone of them did refuse to take the oath in Parliament.

I know of a decision that the TULF took on the 23rd of July 1983 (before the fateful incidents of that day!) at their Mannar Convention, not to go to Parliament after the 22nd of July 1983, consistent with their position at the Referendum of December 1982, where they took a stand to oppose the extension of Parliament. The Sixth Amendment was passed much after this decision.

If what is stated here is incorrect, I shall thank you to correct me through your columns and I shall be equally thankful if you would correct your Editorial if the facts are otherwise.

G.G. Ponnambalam (Jr.),

General Secretary,
All Ceylon Tamil Congress,
120 Main Street,
Jaffna.

REFERENDUM

I AM grieved to see that the Government and some parties are trying to have a referendum whether the North-Eastern province should be one or two provinces. If the Government is really interested in knowing the wishes of the people, then they should be given the choice to choose one of the following:

1. Whether they would like to separate the two provinces or,
2. To have it as one province with full autonomy for the Muslims by having a council to manage their own affairs.
3. To have Amparai-Kalmunai area

as Eastern province and the balance as North-Eastern province.

The voters should be asked to give their preference as first or second choice. All those who were natives of the Eastern province in 1947 should be given the right to vote. In addition if you really want to know the real wishes of the people why not you give the people of the North-Eastern province whether they want to be part of Sri Lanka or as a separate state. It would further make the people's choice real if the referendum is conducted under UN supervision so that the free will of the people can be known.

Instead of solving the problem by peaceful means, this referendum will aggravate it. If not for the LTTE fighting the Indian army (as it happened in the beginning of the last century when Britain wanted to make Ceylon as part of the Madras, the Tamils opposed it vehemently) by now they would have made their stay and would have lot of influence over the country. Instead of bringing real peace talks to solve the problem, the move to have a referendum at the moment would worsen the situation in Sri Lanka, unless it is had by the United Nations to know the real wishes of the people of the North and East.

K.Mailvaganam,

2419 Kirstie Court,
Burlington, Ontario,
L7P 3Y9, Canada.

BOOK REVIEW



Dr. Indra Kumar's 'Epics in Space'

The 'Thinakaran' newspaper from Sri Lanka has commenced serialising Dr. K. Indra Kumar's forthcoming book in Tamil, 'Vinnveliyil Veerakaviyangaal' ('Epics in Space'), in its Sunday edition. It is expected to continue every Sunday till December 1993.

Focusing on the history of manned space flights (1961 to date), the book is a tribute to the unparalleled courage of the men and women (including Rakesh Sharma from India), who have willingly risked their lives to explore the hostile environment of space.

The previous book on Space Research by Dr. Indra Kumar (now domiciled in UK), 'Mannil Irunthu Vinnit-

ku' ('From Earth to Space') published in Sri Lanka in 1973 received the Sri Lanka President's Sahitya (Literary) Award for an outstanding publication of that year. The late Professor K. Kularatnam (Geography) had hailed the book as a 'landmark in Tamil writing'. The late Professor A.W. Mailvaganam (Physics) had expressed amazement at the fluid and facile style in which the author, a medical doctor, had put across the extremely complicated, multi-disciplinary subject of Cosmonautics and paid a stirring compliment to him for pioneering the first book in Tamil in that subject. Twenty years later, Dr. Indra Kumar continues to be the sole pioneer in the field in Tamil, either in Sri Lanka or even in India.

Dr. Indra Kumar, a Psychiatrist by Profession, is also the author of 'Firewalking - The Burning Facts' (Parapsychology, English, 1972) and 'Witness to a New Epoch' (Soviet Travelogue, Tamil, 1976). While in Sri Lanka he had been a prolific writer in Space Research and Parapsychology to 'Virakesari', 'Thinakaran', 'Chinthamani', 'Sunday Observer', 'Sunday Times' and 'Daily News'. He had also been a popular broadcaster in Science and Medicine over the 'Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation', having done programmes for UNESCO and also having provided live radio commentaries, in Tamil for the famous USA-USSR, 'Apollo-Soyuz rendezvous in Space' in 1975.

REMEMBERING MAHATHMA GANDHI

[Born on 2nd October 1869]

by

Professor Kopan Mahadeva

The little lamp that Lord Ram lit
Made the mighty British quit,
Leaving India free in own right
To pursue her developmental fight.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, it was
With his spiritual satyagrahic force,
Sweetness, simplicity and spinning wheel
Truth, ahimsa, self-suffering and appeal
To conscience, that claimed Independence
For Bharat from the British - yet friends.

He was offered the sceptre and crown
Which he, with persistence,
Turned right down,
And rejoined his Ram with all his light
Spent in the struggle for human rights.

[From *The Pearly Island & Older Poems*, 60pp, £3.75 plus p&p, ISBN: 1-873265-00-X, 1991, Century House.]

CLASSIFIED ADS

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Tamil parents seek Hindu, fair, tall, slim bride, academically qualified, preferably accountancy for their accountant son, 28, employed in Sydney, Australia. M 683 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek brides under 30 for their two sons, post graduate teacher and supervisor, oil factory, Nigeria. Prepared to migrate. Send photo details. M 684 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil mother seeks partner for accountant son, 32, employed in London. Send details, horoscope, photo. M 685 c/o Tamil Times.

Hospital practising Sri Lankan born doctor, British citizen, Catholic, widower, 56, no children, seeks professional lady partner, 32-40, non-Catholics considered, photo M 686 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu professional parents, Australian citizens, seek qualified partner for daughter, 29, fair, pretty, holding good position, divorced soon after marriage, innocent party. Send details with horoscope. M 687 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek groom for doctor daughter, 33, practising in Colombo. Details, horoscope to M 688 c/o Tamil Times.

Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu parents, American residents seek suitable partner for daughter, mid-forties, never married, young looking and homely with green card. M 689 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil father seeks educated, good looking bride less than 29, for accountant son, 34, Canadian citizen. Send horoscope, photo, details. M 690 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil uncle seeks professional partner from good family background for niece, 32, British citizen, owns house in London, London graduate, works as accountant in London. M 691 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professionally qualified bride, preferably doctor, for doctor son, 31, working in U.K. Send horoscope, details. M 692 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couple on their recent wedding.

Raguraj son of Mr. & Mrs. K. Dharmaratnam of 45 Alfriston Avenue, North Harrow, Middx. and **Sivamanohari** daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. Jeyakumar of 7 Exeter Road, Walthamstow, London E17 on 17th October 1993 at Northwood College Assembly Hall, Maxwell Road, Northwood Middx.

OBITUARIES

Mr. Murugesu Ganeshalingam, Retired Divisional Irrigational Engineer, beloved husband of Mangayathkarasi; loving father of Jeyanthi (Canada), Vigneswaralingam, Jeyarathy (U.K.), Jeyanalini, Jeyavathany; father-in-law of Balasuntharam, Santhini and Sukumar; grandfather of Sanjutha, Sanjeevan, Jayanthan and Sutharsan passed away on 26th August 1993. Funeral took place at Imayanan, Udupidix, Sri Lanka. - 26 Oxford Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 2XG. Tel: 081 553 2293.



Mr. M. Murugupillai (70), of Palai-Maviddapuram, Retired Assessor, Income Department, and Auditor; formerly of Ramakrishna Road, Wellawatte; lately resident of Melbourne, Australia; dearly beloved husband of Rajarajeswari nee Paper Nadarajah; loving father of Kamala Jothi (Rugby, U.K.) and Sivakumar (Melbourne); dear father-in-law of Dr. N.W. Vijeyapalan (Rugby) and Priyakanthi (Melbourne); adored grandfather of Prabhani and Shivani (Rugby); Vignesh and Kapilan (Melbourne); brother-in-law of the late Vairavapillai and Chelliah, Sellammah Kasiviswanathan and Sinnathurai (Retired

Central Bank) both of Palai passed away in Rugby, whilst on holiday with the daughter, on 22nd September, and was cremated at Coventry on 27th September. The members of the family convey their very sincere thanks to all relatives and friends who assisted in the obsequies, attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy. They regret their inability to thank them individually - 129 Brawnmore Road, Bilton, Rugby CV22 6JJ. Tel: 0788 817301.

Mrs. Selvaranee Suntharalingam, beloved wife of V. Suntharalingam, formerly of Inland Revenue Department, Sri Lanka; mother of Skanthakumar (U.S.A.), formerly of the staff of the Department of Physics, Universities of Peradeniya and Jaffna, Vasuhi (New Zealand) and Mythili; mother-in-law of Paramanatham (New Zealand); grandmother of Janani; daughter of S.T. Kandiah (Kokuvil West) and sister of Indranee Balasubramaniam (Sri Lanka), Ramesvaran (U.S.A.) and Thyalnayaki Elyatamby (Canada) passed away on 17th September and the cremation took place in Trinidad on 21st September 1993. - 13 Realspring Avenue, Valsayn Trinidad.

IN MEMORIAM



In loving memory of **Mrs. Thangaratnam Thangarajah** (Retired Principal, Sri Shanmuga Vidyalayam, Trincomalee and Navaly Maha Vidyalayam, Jaffna) on the first anniversary of her passing away on 2nd October 1992.

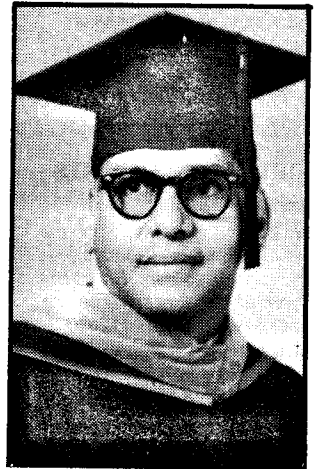
Greatly missed and fondly remembered with love and affection by her children Manohari (Australia), Dr. Maheswaran (U.K.) and Nirmalarajan (Australia); son-in-law Sivashanmugam (Abu Dhabi); daughters-in-law Bhavani and Geethanjali; grandchildren Prasanth, Sharmila, Dhanusha, Vidhya, Bharghavi and Sindhura - 61A Stanley Street, Burwood, NSW2134, Australia / 7 Audrey Gardens, North Wembley, Middx. HA0 3TF / 3/6 Ray Road, Epping, NSW2121, AUSTRALIA.



Mrs. Nagamma Thambirajah departed on 31.10.92. Fondly remembered of her passing away by her loving children Dr. Guna-suntharam (Streatham, London), Sivalingam (Sri Lanka), Muthulingam (Toronto, Canada), Mahalingam (Wembley, U.K.), Ratnasingham (Toronto, Canada) and Selvamalar (Mississauga, Canada); daughters-in-law Rajini, Malar, Vicky, Vasanthi and Kala; son-in-law Ganeshathasan; grandchildren Nimalan, Kavitha, Sivaranjini, Sivaruban, Tharijini, Theepan, Partheeban, Aarani, Samantha, Rohan and Rahavan - 48 Leigham Avenue, London SW16. Tel: 081-677 5688.

IN MEMORIAM

Lovingly remembered on the 4th Anniversary of the passing away of



Daniel Selvarajah Sanders, Ph.D., ACSW,
Sept. 28, 1928 - Oct. 14, 1989

Dean, Professor and Director of International Program, School of Social Work, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA 1971-1986;

Dean, Professor and Director for the Center for Study of International Social Welfare Policies and Services, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, USA 1980-1989.

Founder and First President.
Continued on page 28

Please Note
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Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development, (IUCISD) USA 1980-1989.

The Third Annual DANIEL S. SANDERS PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE LECTURE (April 1993) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was given by Dr. James Midgley, Dean, School of Social Work and Associate Vice-Chancellor for Research, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana USA. Dr. Midgley's memorial lecture was on THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THEIR THIRD WORLD AND OURS.

Dedication: Profiles in International Social Work edited by Professors Merl. C. Hokenstad, Shanti K. Khinduka and James Midgley.

'This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Daniel S. Sanders in recognition of his leadership in the field of International Social Work. Dan was a man of ideas and energy whose mission and approach transcended national boundaries. His scholarship and organizational leadership made him a pivotal figure in advancing international collaboration both in social development and social work. His life, work, and friendship continue to inspire those of us who strive for greater international understanding and collaboration in our profession.'

Christobel Chelvathy & Harriet C. Sanders, Sanders/Niles families, 614 West Florida Avenue, Urbana, Illinois 61801 USA.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

November 1 All Saints Day.

Nov. 2 All Souls Day. Shobana Jeyasingh presents 'Romance... with footnotes' in Bharatha Natyam at the Junction Theatre, Cambridge. Tel: 0223 412600.

Nov. 6 3.00pm Sri Lankan Dance Drama at Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8 6NQ. Tel: 071-602 0702 (Karen Dale). 7.00pm. Wesley College O.B.A. (U.K. Br.) presents Double Blue Ball at Vivian Simmons Hall, 326 Preston Road, Harrow, Middx. Tel: 081-946 9220 (Wimal). Shobana Jeyasingh presents 'Romance... with footnotes' in Bharatha Natyam at The Alhambra Theatre, Bradford. Tel: 0274 752000.

Nov. 10 Eekathasi.

Nov. 11 Pirathosam. 6.00pm Lecture on 'Tamil Self-determination and the role of the L.T.T.E. at School of Oriental & African Studies. Tel: 071-278 3990 (S. Wijesinghe) Shobana Jeyasingh presents 'Romance... with foot-

notes' in Bharatha Natyam at Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea. Tel: 0792 296883.

Nov. 12 Shobana Jeyasingh presents 'Romance... with footnotes' in Bharatha Natyam at Aberystwyth Arts Centre. Tel: 0970 623232.

Nov. 13 Amavasai. Deepavali.

Nov. 14 Skanthashasti Viratham starts.

Nov 17 Sathurthi.

Nov. 19 Skanthashasti Viratham ends.

Nov. 20 6.00pm Skanda Varodaya College Old Students' Association (U.K. Branch) annual Reunion Dinner, A.G.M. and Disco at Holy Cross Convent School Hall, Sandal Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 5AR. Tel: 081-681 2052/692 0823.

Nov. 20 6.00pm Northern Tamil Association, U.K. presents Bharatha Natyam and Instrumental Music Recital at Rainhill Village Hall, Rainhill, Prescott, Liverpool. Tel: 0724 860329/0254 208907/0706 229666.

Nov. 20 6.30pm News Media International presents Bharatha Natya Recital by Chitra Visweswaran at Winston Churchill Hall, Pim Way, Ruislip, Middx. Tel: 081-961 5962/470 7883/864 5962/689 7503.

Nov. 21 Feast of Christ the King.

Nov. 24 Eekathasi.

Nov. 25 6.00pm Lecture on J.V.P. - Origin, Objectives & Strategies at School of Oriental & African Studies. Tel: 071-278 3990 (S. Wijesinghe).

Nov. 26 Pirathosam. Shobana Jeyasingh presents 'Romance... with footnotes' in Bharatha Natyam at Contemporary Music Festival, Huddersfield. Tel: 0484 430808.

Nov. 28 Sunday in Advent.

Nov. 30 St. Andrew's Feast.

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071-381 3086/4608.

Nov. 6 & 20 5.30pm Lecture on 'Bhavagad Gita' by Shri Mathoor Krishnamurthi. All Welcome.

Nov. 7 6.30pm Dance Ballet from Tagore play directed by Mrs. Shyamalia Basu.

Norway and Jaffna Universities Cooperate

An agreement of cooperation between the University of Jaffna and the University of Tromso, Norway (The Northernmost University of the World) was signed on 30.8.93 in Tromso. The universities have agreed to promote such academic exchange and coop-

the research fields of fisheries, rural development and environmental studies through appropriate means such as (a) Exchange of faculty members and graduate students (b) Conducting joint research in areas of mutual interest (c) Exchange of scholars for lectures, conferences, colloquia, symposia and sharing of experience (d) Exchange of information in fields of interest to both parties. The picture below shows Prof. A. Thuraiarajah, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna and Pro. Ole D. Mjos, Rector of the University of Tromso signing on behalf of their respective Universities.



The British Tamil Directory

Tamils involved in social and cultural activities have felt the need for a social and cultural directory for Tamils. The British Tamil Directories offer to provide free listing of all Tamil organisations and individuals such as General Medical Practitioners, artists and tutors. This would enrich the database and make the Directory comprehensive. The Directory is expected to be released in the latter part of November. For further information please contact British Tamil Directories, 180 Shrewsbury Road, Forest Gate, London E7 8QJ. Tel: 081-471 2348.

Canadian Lawyer Writes to Sri Lankan President

Mr. Max Berger, Canadian Barrister and Solicitor has written to Sri Lankan President, Mr. D.B. Wijetunge protesting against the tragic situation in Northern Sri Lanka. He states: 'I am a Canadian lawyer who has represented thousands of Tamil refugee claimants who have been granted Convention Refugee status in Canada. I have heard too many personal histories of death and suffering at the hands of your government's army and police. The latest round of fighting in the Jaffna Peninsula represents a crime against humanity. Innocent Tamil civilians, not the L.T.T.E. are most severely affected. Your forces are bombing Tamil homes, temples and schools. There is a

serious shortage of food and medicine for infants and young children. The conflict in Jaffna Peninsula must be resolved through negotiation not through warfare. Your government's many promises to achieve a peaceful solution to the problems in the north of Sri Lanka ring hollow. Mr. Wijetunge, the world is watching you. The world is watching not what you say, but what you do.'

Bhrindha's Delightful Debut



The Arangetram of Bhrindha Selvarajasingam, disciple of Menaka Raviraj took place at Carshalton High School Hall on Sunday, 12th September. The reception at the entrance by young girls with the traditional Penner chembu and sugar candy was heartwarming and made us wonder why many other organisers treat their invitees differently, as if at a public theatre. This Arangetram, we understand, is not only Bhrindha's debut but also for her Guru Menaka in presentation. Another novelty here was the introduction of a male voice along with that of the well known singer Ambika Thamothearam. It is encouraging to find the well known light music singer Sathiamurthy taking up to dance music which would give him scope for deep vocal expression. Bhrindha showed full involvement in her abhinaya sequences and her jathis and tempo were remarkably coherent. One wonders what the purpose was for reciting the Abhinayadarpana slokas for Pataka hasta viniyogams and the Navarasa slokas like a lyric with instrumental support. This did not convey any meaning to the audience. It would have been better if it was conducted as a demonstrative exercise with proper planning. As a maiden exercise for Menaka it is a very successful effort and her

disciple Bhrendha deserves all encouragement and support for further progress. She had a full orchestra at the Arangetram, with Sivaraaja's mridangam, Kothandapani's violin, Saraswathi Nataraja's veena and Angello Kumardasan's Ghatam and Morsing.

Kalabhavanam's Varied Presentations

Lalgudi Heritage

In their monthly feature of Chamber music **Kalabhavanam** presented on 29th August, the well known musician Dr. Lakshmi Jayan with her son Arvind in a special violin concert at the Willis Road mini auditorium before a select knowledgeable audience. The performance was interspersed surprisingly with vocal renderings by Lakshmi whose classical style and swara credibility remains perfect still unspoilt. In her Karaharapriya alapana one could find the age old nathaswara mode, which fortunately has kept the purity of our ragas unspoilt.

The occasion was to young **Arvind** a memorable one. In the full repertoire of krithies, varam, ragam thanam pallavi, and thillana, Young Arvind, just a week off obtaining four A's in his academic chase, exhibited his brilliant handling of the violin in the well known style of Lalgudi Jayaraman, whose stamp of virtuosity is well known. Both mother and son playing in unison enthralled the audience. Arvind proved that he has a bright future with his violin and his yearly visit to Lalgudi Jayaraman in India should provide higher achievements.

Anuradha's Solo Bharatanatyam

In between the crowded Bharatanatyam Arangetra celebrations it was a pleasant thought on the part of **KALABHAVANAM** to have arranged a typically traditional and authentic Bharata Natyam and Abhinayam by a well known artiste from Madras, **Anuradha Jagannathan**, a very senior exponent of the art who was trained by the Vazhuvoor school maestro Swamimalai Rajaratnam. Additionally she has been specially trained in the Abhinaya styles by the famous exponent Kalanidhi Narayanan. The concert was on 3rd October at the South Norwood Centre, Croydon and the packed audience was treated to a wholesome dance and abhinaya sequences. The lady who is well versed in English and the science of dance presented her programme first explaining the meaning of

each item and demonstrating some of the meanings through gestures. It was a pleasant experience for some of the students of dance who attended this programme. It was a novel production and if all professional dancers adopt this method of presenting their programmes our children will be benefited immensely.

Kuttalam Nagarajan

The young Karnatic singer **Kuttalam Nagarajan** who is on a second visit to London delighted the members of Kalabhavanam on Sunday, 10th October at the usual Willis Road mini auditorium with a full orchestra. Sponsored by Mridangam Maestro Karaikudi Krishnamurthi, Kuttalam Nagarajan was in his best and the audience was thrilled at the performance. Besides the chosen classical numbers he sang some popular lyrics with full verve and the audience was mesmerised. Karaikudi Krishnamurthi played the mridangam, Thiruvarur Kothandapani on the violin, Bhaskaran Ghatam and as a special invitee Krishnamurthi's disciple Selvi Kavitha Devarajah also played on the mridangam with exceptional skill and competence.



Mr. Rasa Rajendra of Bishop's Stortford, Herts, U.K. has been elected President of the Bishop's Stortford Lions Club. Picture above shows him receiving the Chain of Honour.



D.Sc. Award to Tamil Academic

Professor Ratnajeewan Hoole of Harvey Mudd College, California, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Science by the University of London for his contribution to Computational Electromagnetics in Electrical Engineering. This prestigious degree is awarded on the basis of substantial internationally recognised

publications in the chosen field of research. Professor Hoole, who at 40 is relatively young for this award, has over 80 research papers to his credit and his book 'Computer-aided analysis and design of electromagnetic devices' is the first of its kind and is being widely used by universities and research establishments.

Professor Hoole received his first degree from the University of Ceylon, M.Sc. from the University of London and Ph.D. from Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh. He is the third son of the late Rev. and Mrs. R.H.R. Hoole of Nallur, Jaffna.



Kumudini's Arangetram

The Bharathi natya arangetram of **Kumudini**, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Visuwaratnam was presented by Lakshmi Arts Centre on the 4 September 1993, at the Logan Hall, University of London. The Guru Smt. Selvaluxmy Ramakrishnan has a reputation of having produced a string of excellent artistes and Kumi had a lot to live up to.

After the initial pieces Kumi moved on to the more demanding items of the repertoire. The song for the Varnam was 'Saamiyai vara cholladi... in the Raga Poorvikalyani set to Adi thalam. The demands of this item in terms of combinations of pure rhythmic dance with the more expressive aspects, were met with confidence. The admiration of the heroic deeds of Lord Kumarasamy, amusement with the way in which He set out to lure Vali and the irritation that He had not responded to her own pleas, were all portrayed with commendable competence. Blemishes such as the inadequacy of araimandi, which cropped up occasionally, seemed to be more than compensated for by the excellent expressive quality of the debutante's performance.

The Patham 'Meenakshi thaaye...' in the Raga Abohi, set

to Adi thalam followed. The sahitya of the piece gave plenty of scope to convey both bhava the emotional content and the picture content and Kumi brought these out very well.

There followed a lullaby in Neelambari by Murugan thalattu. The crowning Patham was for the song 'Aputha chitpiyedi...' in a Ragamalikai set to Thisragathi in praise of Nataraja the Creator and the presiding deity of Chidambaram. It was apposite that some of the karunas (postures) derived from the sculpture of Chidambaram, were depicted in an unhurried manner in this dance.

The music was provided by Smt. Sivasakthi Sivanesan. The combined efforts of Selvaluxmy's nattuvangam and Sivasakthi's singing drew the best from Kumi. Sivasakthi is Kumi's music Guru and this, no doubt, was a bonus. All contributed to the success of the Arangetram - Muthu Sivaraaja on the mridangam, Lakshmi Jayan on the violin, Dr. Nimalraj on the flute and Kalpana Srinivas on the thambura.

The program concluded with the Thillana followed by mangalam. The Thillana was in Kathanakuthukalam and was a scintillating finale. The organisers had included in the invitations not only a starting time but had broken tradition in daringly stating a finishing time. They managed to keep to both. Was this further evidence of the rigorous preparations that must have gone into the Arangetram? The Chief Guest was Mr. A.T. Moorthy, former High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in the U.K. In his speech he referred to the Tamil classic Silappadikaram and its contribution to Dance. It is incumbent on youngsters like Kumi to continue to help preserve this ancient form of art.

Saarukesil.

Matrimonial

Confidential introduction undertaken for Tamil Christians only. Correspondence once a suitable partner is found. Nominal fee payable from both parties. No liabilities accepted. Dr. Royce Arasaratnam, Doctors Mess, Ipswich Hospital, Ipswich IP4 2TS, U.K.

Solicitor Required

Jaffna Tamil requires solicitors in U.K. reputable firm and strong connections in Colombo to retrieve birth time from a hospital in Colombo. Send for details. E 62 c/o Tamil Times.

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